DARK
HORSE
MANGA
BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL
127
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LIFE OR DEATH
ONE SHOT
HIROAKI SAMURA
BLADE
OF THE IMMORTAL
color pinup by
FAREL
DALRYMPLE
EAGLE AWARDS 2007
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BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

art, story, and front cover by

HIROAKI SAMURA

translation by **DANA LEWIS**

lettering and retouch by **TOMOKO SAITO**

back cover color pinup **FAREL DALRYMPLE**

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Immortal *rōnin*, vowed to protect Rin and aid her in her quest for revenge.

RIN

Last heir of the Mutenichi-*ryū dōjō* which was destroyed by the Ittō-*ryū*.

HABAKI KAGIMURA

Powerful *bangashira*, serving the shogun and seeking the secret of immortality.

DŌA

A small, brash Ittō-*ryū* warrior, quick on her feet and eager to brawl.

ISAKU

Dōa's trusted bodyguard, a hefty Ittō-*ryū* warrior arrested for a street fight Dōa started.

BURANDO

Deranged doctor and pioneer in *kessen-chu* transference.

THE STORY SO FAR

Infected by *kessen-chu*, mystical bloodworms which can heal all wounds and grant their host immortality, Manji's bloodthirst led to the capture and murder of his sister. To atone for this and for the 100 innocent people who died at his hand while he served a corrupt lord, Manji vowed to slay 1,000 evil men in exchange for the release of death.

Imprisoned in an underground cell beneath Edo Castle, Manji is an unwilling participant in Habaki Kagimura's "immortality experiments." Kagimura's demented lead doctor, Burando, increases the speed of the experiments as his sanity slips away. While searching for Manji and Isaku, Rin and Dōa stumble across a mountain of dead bodies and a simple-minded beggar who leads them to the "Badger Hole," an entrance to the underground tunnel system that runs beneath Edo Castle—and possibly to Kagimura's cruel prisons.

designer **SCOTT COOK** editorial assistant **RYAN JORGENSEN**
editor **PHILIP SIMON** publisher **MIKE RICHARDSON**

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LETTERS

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GLOSSARY

Bangashira: Head of the *banshū*.

Banshū: Officers serving under the shogun, usually assigned to Edo Castle to defend the shogun himself.

Chōkichi: Chōkichi is the owner/chef of a dive that the Mugai-*ryū* frequented before they were disbanded.

Dōjō: A school for combat and self-defense training in martial arts; here, a training center for swordsmanship.

Dono: Archaic honorific used to show respect, usually for someone of higher rank.

Edo: Capital of pre-modern Japan. Later renamed Tokyo.

Itto-ryū: The radical sword school of Anotsu Kagehisa.

Kessen-chu: The "sacred bloodworms." A person infected by them cannot die but feels pain like a mortal.

Mugai-ryū: Sword school of the Akagi assassins; literally, "without form."

Mutenichi-ryū: The sword school led by Rin's father (now deceased), destroyed by Anotsu Kagehisa.

Okowa: Rice steamed with condiments.

Ryō: A high-value gold coin.

Ryū: A sword school.

NEXT ISSUE!

A unique wraparound cover and the beginning of a major new story arc! The "Badger Hole" is a tunnel of death that leads into the bowels of Edo Castle. Rin and Dōa begin a reckless descent into this darkness, hoping to rescue their captive friends. The girls are reckless, indeed, but they're not going without a few *new tricks* up their sleeves!

ABOUT THE SWASTIKA

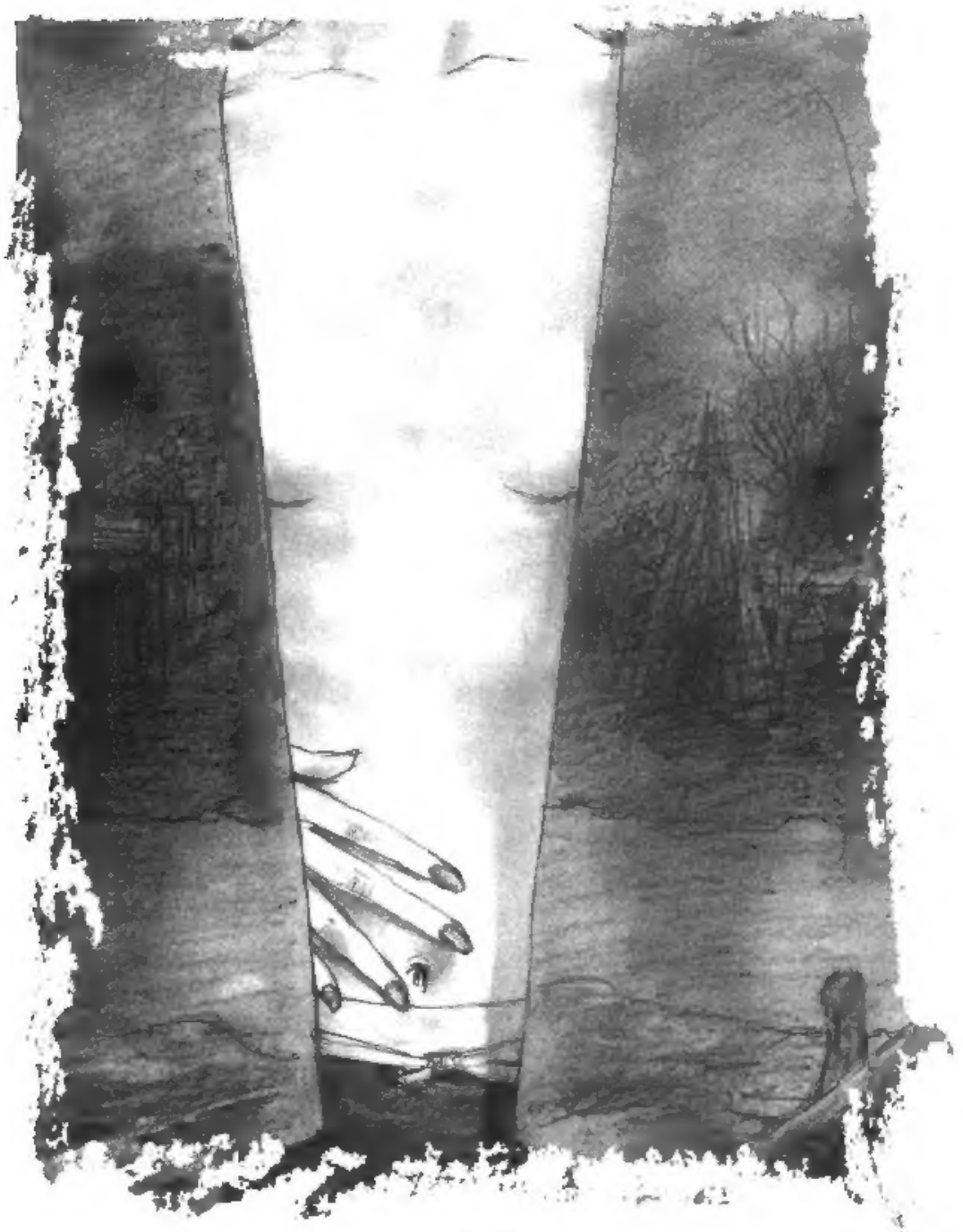
The main character in *Blade of the Immortal*, Manji, has taken the "crux gammata" as both his name and his personal symbol. This symbol is also known as the *swastika*, a name derived from the Sanskrit *svastika* (meaning "welfare," from *su*—"well" + *asti*—"he is"). As a symbol of prosperity and good fortune, the *swastika* was widely used throughout the ancient world (for example, appearing often on Mesopotamian coinage), including North and South America and has been used in Japan as a symbol of Buddhism since ancient times. To be precise, the symbol generally used by Japanese Buddhists is the *sauvastika*, which moves in a counterclockwise direction, and is called the *manji* in Japanese. The *sauvastika* generally stands for night, and often for magical practices. The *swastika*, whose arms point in a clockwise direction, is generally considered a solar symbol. It was this version (the *hakenkreuz*) that was perverted by the Nazis. It is important that readers understand that the *swastika* has ancient and honorable origins, and it is those that apply to this story, which takes place in the 18th century (ca. 1782-3). *There is no anti-Semitic or pro-Nazi meaning behind the use of the symbol in this story. Those meanings did not exist until after 1910.*

ABOUT THE TRANSLATION

The Artwork: The author of *Blade of the Immortal* requested that we make an effort to avoid mirror-imaging his artwork. Some manga are first copied in a mirror-image in order to facilitate the left-to-right reading of the pages. However, Mr. Samura decided that he would rather see his pages reversed via the technique of cutting up the panels and repasting them in reverse order. While we feel that this often leads to problems in panel-to-panel continuity, we place primary importance on the wishes of the creator. Therefore, most of *Blade of the Immortal* has been produced using the "cut and paste" technique. There are, of course, some sequences where it was impossible to do this, and mirror-imaged panels or pages were used instead.

The Sound Effects & Dialogue: Since some of Mr. Samura's sound effects are integral parts of the artwork, the decision was made to leave those in their original Japanese. When it was crucial to the understanding of the panel that the sound effect be in English, however, Mr. Samura chose to redraw the panel. We hope readers will view the un-retouched sound effects as essential portions of Mr. Samura's extraordinary artwork. In addition, Mr. Samura's treatment of dialogue is quite different from that featured in average samurai manga and is considered to be one of the things that has made *Blade* such a huge hit in Japan. Mr. Samura has mixed a variety of linguistic styles in this fantasy story, where some characters speak in the mannered style of old Japan, while others speak as if they were street-corner punks from a bad area of modern-day Tokyo. The anachronistic slang used by some of the characters in the English translation reflects the unusual mix of speech patterns from the original Japanese text.

無限の住人



LIFE OR DEATH

HOH! THAT MAN.
I SEE! A RAVAGED LOOK HE HAS...
LOOK! THAT'S HIM.
IN THE DUNGEON HE... WHISPER WHISPER...
AND THAT'S NOT ALL... WHISPER WHISPER...
DEATH GOD, EH? DIDN'T YOU KNOW?
A DEATH GOD'S WORK, IT IS.

YAMADA ASA-EMON, TOO! EVERY DAY...
THEN THAT MOUNTAIN OF CORPSES...?
A MON-STER, THAT ONE...
CAN'T BELIEVE HE STILL CALLS HIMSELF A DOCTOR...
YOU GOT SOMETHING TO SAY, SAY IT!!
DEATH GOD?! MONSTER?!! FINE, FINE! CALL ME WHAT YOU WILL!
BUT REMEMBER THIS!

THE NAMES OF SHEEP AREN'T CARVED IN HISTORY!
YOUR JOB IS TO BE HERDED!
CAN'T BELIEVE I'M A DOCTOR?! SPEAK FOR YOURSELVES!!
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
GOOD GOD! THE NERVE OF HIM.
A BEGGAR QUACK, TALKING LIKE THAT...
SKILLS THAT LAST A CENTURY...
...MIGHT SEEM LIKE MAGIC TO ONE'S CONTEMPORARIES.

IS HE GOOD OR BAD? THAT'S FOR LATER DAYS TO SAY.
NOT FOR US TO QUESTION OR JUDGE.

HEAVENS... ALWAYS SO *LOGICAL*, KURATA-*SENSEI*...
WELL, PERHAPS SO... BUT...

はあ！

KINMICHI: THE NAME OF ASAEMON'S SWORD.

BWAAH HAH HAH!
ASAEMON-DONO?! IS YOUR BLADE A BIT DULL?
DEAR, OH DEAR. LOOKY!
OHHH...
UNGK!
DIDN'T EVEN SCRATCH HIM!
WOHH...
.....
.....
.....
YOUNG BURANDO, I ALWAYS SAY...
...TAK-ING A MAN'S LIFE AND...
...WAST-ING A MAN'S LIFE ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS.

MY MEDICINE FROM HIS LIVER CURES SOMEONE'S TB.
A FELON DIES. YOUR TECHNIQUE IMPROVES.
HOW SUPERIOR TO DYING A DOG'S DEATH!
YOUNG BURANDO! SHOULD YOU...
THIS IS THE PRODUCTIVE LIFE!
...BUT THANK YOU!
UH, NOT THAT MANY, BUT...
...KILL THOUSANDS! TENS OF THOUSANDS! MILLIONS!
I WILL STILL SUPPORT YOU.
I'LL DO THEM AND DO THEM AND DO THEM!
HAH HAH HAH! YES, GO FOR IT.
BY THE WAY, LAD. HAVE YOU BEEN SLEEPING?

HYAKU-RIN...
DRIED CHESTNUT OKOWA?! GOSH! MY FAVOR-ITE!
AH HAH. IT WAS A LABOR OF LOVE.
FOR CHIKICHI, THAT IS
AND WELL, FOR GOOD LUCK, TOO.
EH?

YOU'RE GOING, RIGHT?
TO MANJI'S SIDE?
...YES.
HMM...
MM?
NATURAL-LY... I'LL LEND A HAND.
OH, AHH... THIS TIME...
...I THINK JUST DŌA AND I'LL GO.
YOU TWO?
YOU AND THAT CHILD?
...SHE'S TOUGHER THAN SHE LOOKS.
YES. ONLY... IT'S NOT AS RASH AS IT SOUNDS.
I'M NOT MUCH, BUT DŌA...

I MAY BE RUSTY...
...BUT IF YOU DON'T MIND MY SAYING, I'M BETTER IN A FIGHT THAN YOU.
WELL, I GATHERED AS MUCH.
BUT STILL, THERE'S STRENGTH IN NUMBERS.
YET...
...YET I'M ALREADY IN YOUR DEBT.
I'M NOT JUST SAYING THIS TO MEDDLE, CHILD.
THIS IS PARTLY MY RESPONS-IBILITY.
HYAKURIN-SAN.
WHAT ON EARTH?
HEAV-ENS! SINCE WHEN DID SHE TURN SO COLD?

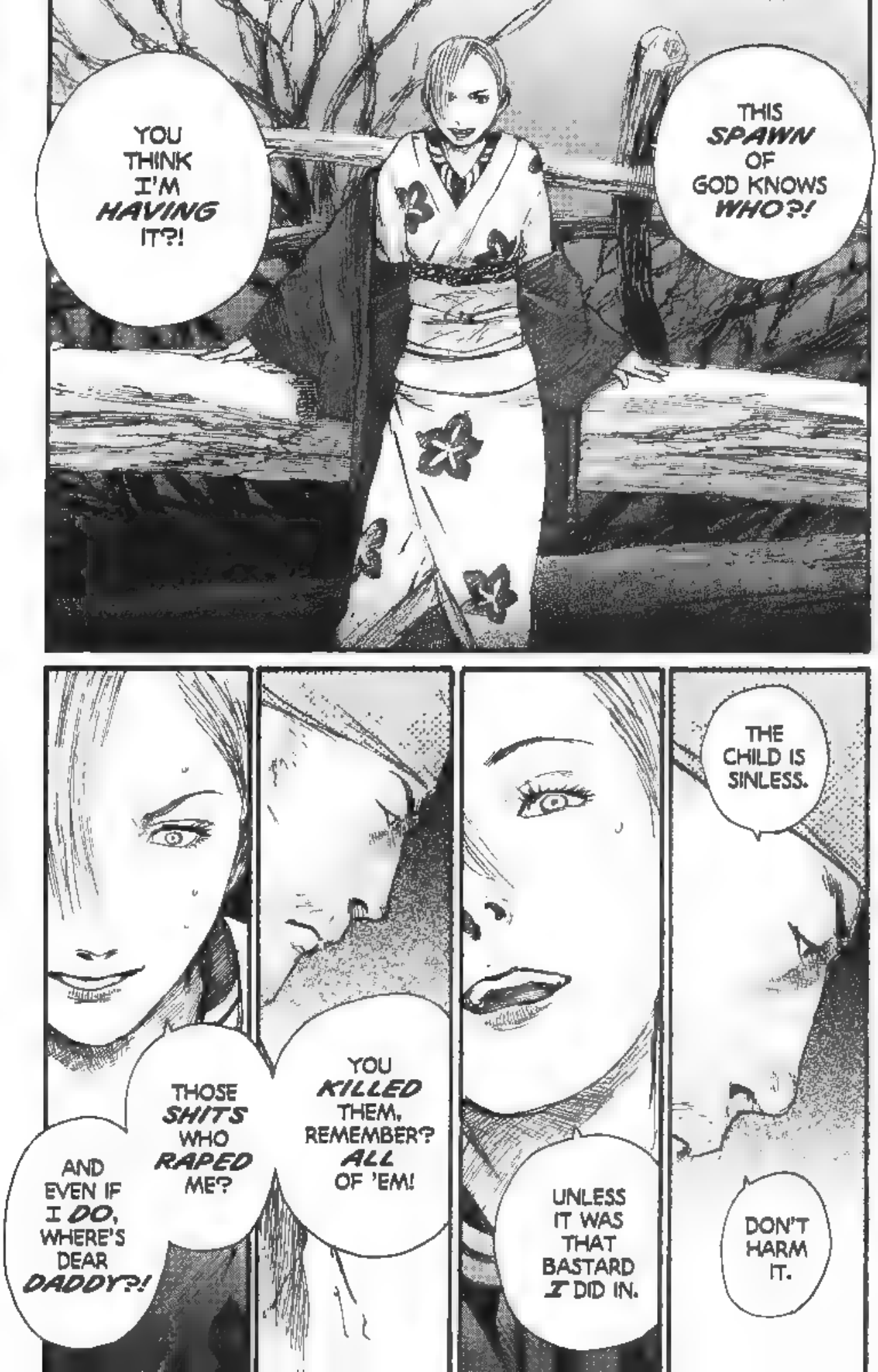
IT'S NOT ABOUT *RESTRAINT*... NOR *FIGHTING SKILL*.
THIS TIME I HAVE *NO* INTENTION OF ASKING YOU FOR HELP.
NOTHING OF THE SORT.
IT'S JUST... THIS MORN-ING...
...GIICHI CAME BY THE *DŌJŌ*...

FWAPP
FEH!

GYAAA
GYAAA
.....
.....
.....
GIICHI...

...WHEN DID YOU NOTICE?
THAT I'M PREG-NANT...?
.....
.....
.....
THE OTHER DAY. WHEN YOU CAME WITH THE GIRL.
NO KIDDING.
THAT'S RICH.

YOU PAY MORE ATTENTION THAN I THOUGHT.
AND SO YOU TOLD ME TO SHOVE OFF?
...THAT'S RIGHT.
IN OTHER WORDS, BEHAVE MYSELF?
YES. YOU SHOULDN'T OVERDO IT SO EARLY...
...IN YOUR PREG-NANCY.
YOU'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE. BE CAREFUL.
PARDON ME?
"BE CARE-FUL," YOU SAY?
CAREFUL? AHHH HAH HAH HAH!


YOU THINK I'M HAVING IT?!
THIS SPAWN OF GOD KNOWS WHO?!
THE CHILD IS SINLESS.
DON'T HARM IT.
UNLESS IT WAS THAT BASTARD I DID IN.
YOU KILLED THEM, REMEMBER? ALL OF 'EM!
THOSE SHITS WHO RAPED ME?
AND EVEN IF I DO, WHERE'S DEAR DADDY?!

...HAH HAH.
AH HAH HAH HAH!
AHHH HAH HAH HAH...!
GIICHI...?
KNOW WHAT?
YOU WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT ME.
YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW? WHY KAGIMURA FREED ME WHEN I HAD...
...MORE THAN FIFTY RYŌ TO GO...?

YOU PAID IT OFF. ALL OF IT.
BUT, OH-- SO SORRY-- I DON'T FEEL LIBERATED AT ALL.
MUST FEEL PRETTY FULL OF YOURSELF, HUH?
THAT'S RIGHT.
IT'S LIKE SHINRIJI AND I SCRIMP AND SAVE ALL THAT TIME...
...AND YOU COME ALONG AND SNATCH IT.
ALL YOUR DO-GOODER MEDDLING TURNS OUT WRONG.
JUST LOOK AT THE LIFE IT GOT YOU.
IT'S NOT ENOUGH KILLING YOUR OWN KID.
YOU GOTTA MESS WITH... WITH...

...THIS DAMNED... BASTARD...

THUD
GNNG
FWAM!

LET ME... GO...
SMAK
SMAK
HEH? WAZZAT?
HEY, HEY...
YOU'LL BE SORRY, GII-SAN, HITTIN' A GAL WITH ALL YER MUSCLE.
BUTT OUT.

...OHHH...
...I...
I
CAN'T...
I
CAN'T
DO IT...
NO...
I
CAN'T...
NOT
THIS
CHILD!
IF...
IF I
HAVE
IT...

...SHINRI-JI... CUT APART.
THAT GODAWFUL PAIN... TEARING MY MIND APART.
...REMEM-BERING...
...EVERY TIME I SEE ITS FACE...
THOSE BASTARDS, THEIR FACES, EVERY ONE...
THE POOR THING...
...THIS POOR LITTLE CHILD...
THAT WON'T HAPPEN.
IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT.
ME.

I'LL RAISE IT.
YEAH...
...MAYBE I'M A DO-GOODER...
...LIKE YOU SAY.
LIVING FOR MY WIFE... LIVING FOR MY SON...
ME?

I DON'T WANT A LIFE FOR MYSELF.
DON'T NEED ONE. USELESS.

HYAKU.

YOU AND ME? MUGAI-RYŪ. ITTŌ-RYŪ.
WE ALL CONSUMED LIVES.
BUT NOW, YOUR WORK IN THIS WORLD...

...IS BIRTH.
CREAT-ING LIFE.

THAT CHILD YOU CARRY?
CONSIDER IT OUR LAST CHANCE TO EVER BE NORMAL.
.....
.....
.....
IT'S TRUE. I KNOW.
YOU HAD TWO OF YOUR OWN *STOLEN* FROM YOU.
THAT WAS A *TRAGEDY.* BUT...

...BUT IF YOU'RE NOT...
IF YOU'RE OKAY WITH THAT, GO AHEAD...
...TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY.
.....
.....
.....
.....
...BUT IF THOSE BOYS KNEW THEIR OWN MOTHER WOULD KILL A KID SHE DIDN'T WANT...
...THEY'D CURSE YOU FROM THE GRAVE.

GI-
ICHI...?
?
MM...
NO-
THING.
I LOVE
YOU...
.....
.....
.....
TO BE CONTINUED...

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art and story by

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translation by **DANA LEWIS**
lettering and retouch by **TOMOKO SAITO**
cover colors by **RYAN "INVINCIBLE" HILL**

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Banshu: Officers serving under the shogun, usually assigned to Edo Castle to defend the shogun himself.

Doshin: Low-ranking police officers.

Itto-ryu: The radical sword school of Anotsu Kagehisa.

Koku: Unit of time, approximately two hours.

Komo: Beggars. In this issue, Rin uses the honorifics "O-" and "-SAN" with *komo*, perhaps because of a natural respect for anyone, regardless of their class or social status.

Metsuke: Edo-era inspectors who were responsible for watching the actions and decisions of the *daimyo* (feudal lords). They acted as a sort of intelligence agency for the shogun.

Muteki-ichi ryu: The sword school led by Rin's father (now deceased), destroyed by Anotsu Kagehisa.

Ninpo: Fighting tactics of the *ninja*.

Ri: Edo Period unit of measurement.

Sanmawari: Also known as "the three patrols," the *sanmawari* were three groups of *doshin* who performed specific patrol and criminal investigation duties.

Toshu: Leader, master.

Yoriki: Ranked below the *machi bugyo* and above the *doshin*, the *yoriki* were high-ranking police officers in Edo.

JHOMAR SORIANO

ON THE EVILS UNDER EDO

HOT WATER!
YOU FOOL!
I'M HUNGRY!
HAVE NO MARKED OF LUCK AT ALL
EVERYONE IN THE NEARBY LANDING IS SO CRUEL AND WEIRD
I'D PROBABLY BETTER OFF DEAD
THERE'S MY SWEET LADY
NOW IT'S TIME TO FORGET MY CRAZY JOB
TORA! HONEY, I MISS YOU!!
BUT FIRST TELL ME ALL ABOUT YOUR DAY AT WORK!

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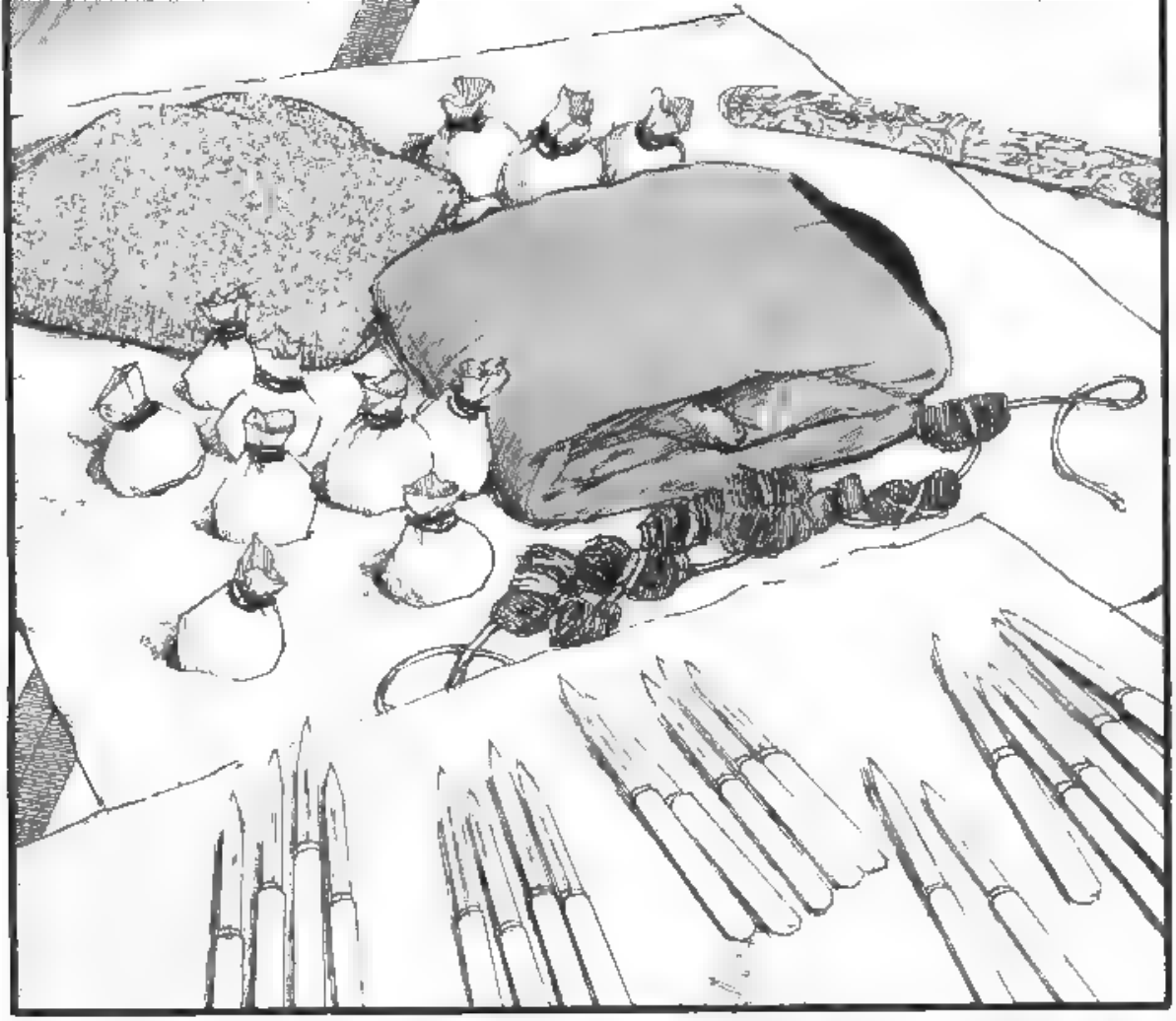


DŌA.
LET'S
GO.

無限の住人

BADGER HOLE
-part one-

RIN, I'M GOING ON AHEAD.
HN?!
I GOT STOPPED BEFORE, AT THE RIVER...
...BUT TODAY...
..I'M GOING TO KILL.
THE TŌSHU SAYS IT'S OKAY...
...IF YOU'RE PROTECTING SOMEONE YOU CARE FOR. SO ANYONE WHO BLOCKS ME-- DEAD.

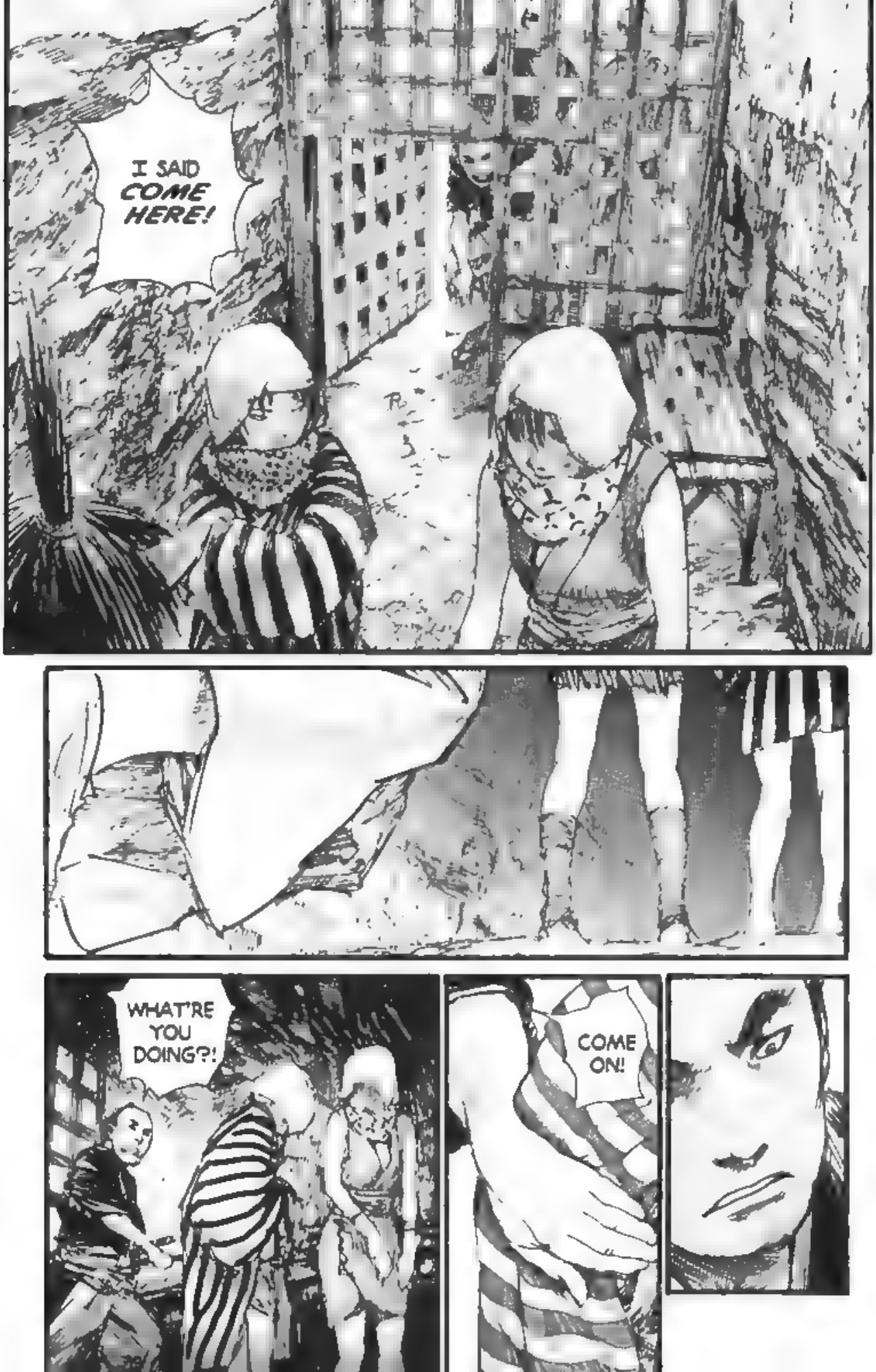
FINE BY ME. TRUTH TO TELL... I'VE *NEVER* THOUGHT MANJI'S LIFE...
...WEIGHED THE SAME AS SOME STRANGER'S.
TPP
TPP

THERE, THERE.
H-H-HELLLP !!
DON'T WORRY! WE WON'T HURT YOU... IF YOU CO-OPERATE, MM?
WHAT? YOU WANT TO WORK IN THE TUNNEL?
YASSIR!
FOLK SAY IT'S BETTER WAGES IN THERE.

PLEASE LISSEN, SIR.
MY MAMA'S GOT SICK. EVEN IF I KIN'T GET A DOC...
..I THOUGHT, IF I KIN GET 'ER SOME GOOD, FILLIN' GRUB... OH BOO HOO HOO!
I HEAR YOU, AND YET...
...WE ALREADY HAVE MORE HANDS THAN WE NEED.
WELL, GO IN AND SEE IF YOUR PALS WILL TRADE.
IF THEY SAY NO, THAT'S IT.
I OWES YOU, SIR!
THANKS.
THANKS.
THANKS.
HRMM?!

HOLD IT. HOLD IT!
WHO ARE THESE TWO?!
ULP!
WE'RE...
...N-NEW-BIES...
"NEW-BIES"...?
YOU SHUT UP!
OH... UH... THESE GUYS--
WHEN YOU STAND HERE ALL DAY, YOU SEE ALL KINDS.

MIXED IN WITH THE BEGGARS IN THEIR STINKING RAGS, YOU GET FOLK WHO *AREN'T* LIKE THAT.
AND WHEN I QUESTION THEM, THEY'LL BE NEW TO THE *LIFE*...
...OR *HOME-LESS*, SENT BY BROKERS.
BUT!
YOU TWO?
DRESSED IN RAGS, BUT WITH-OUT THE *STENCH*? YOU'RE A *FIRST*.
COME OUT HERE.
YOU'LL NEED A *BODY CHECK*.


I SAID COME HERE!
WHAT'RE YOU DOING?!
COME ON!

WHAT THE--?
HNG!
UGHH!
DAMN YOU...
NGUH...
?!

WHAT THE HELLL?!
WHAT IS IT?!
FWIT!

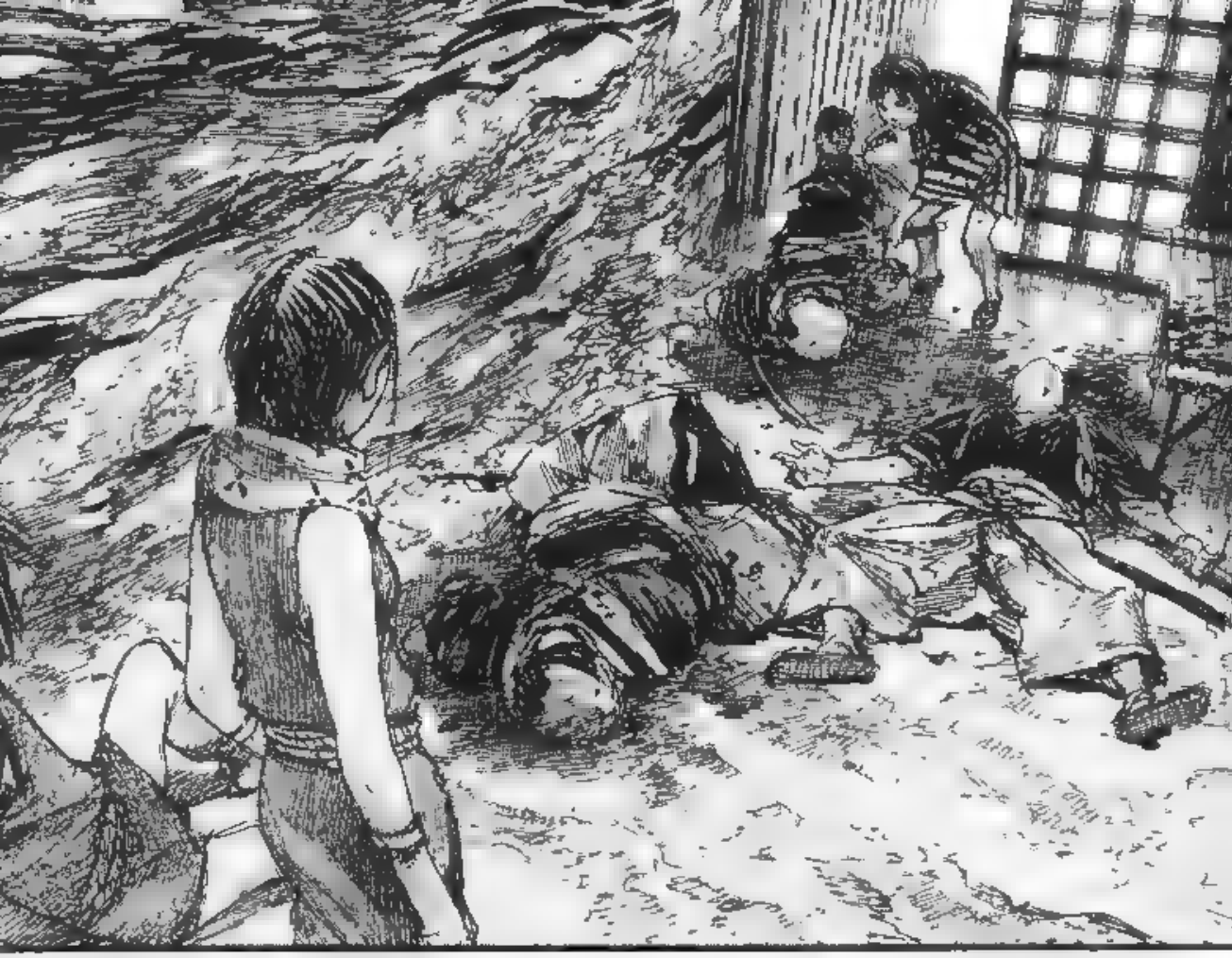
HEAR ME!
WE HAVE NO QUARREL WITH THE SHŌGUN-ATE!
ONLY, WE HAVE LOST LOVED ONES TO THE EXCESSES OF THE METSUKE AND SAN-MAWARI!
WE COME HERE, LED BY RUMOR, THAT THEY ARE HELD WITHIN THIS TUNNEL!

WE HAVE NO DESIRE TO CROSS BLADES WITH YOU, HONORED SIRS! YET IF IT COMES TO THAT...
OUR GOAL IS TO TAKE BACK OUR COMRADES! NOTHING MORE!
...KNOW THAT OUR SWORD SKILLS FAR EXCEED YOUR OWN!

I DO NOT JEST! DON'T THINK OF US AS WOMEN!
IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIVES... DEPART!
.....
.....
.....
AHH... NO GOOD!
THAT WON'T STOP THEM...
INTRUDERS, YOU TALK BIG!
RIN! MOVE!!

KNP KNP KNP KNP!
.....
.....
.....!

UOHHH...



HUH?

UHM...
OUR GUIDES...?

AH...! THEY'RE GONE.
WHERE'D THE OTHER O-KOMO-SAN GO?!
UAAH...?
UH- UH- UHH...
...TH- TH- THEY...
...R- RUNNED AWAY...?
INSIDE?! OUT-SIDE?!
OU- OU- OUT-SIDE!
...THIS IS BAD.

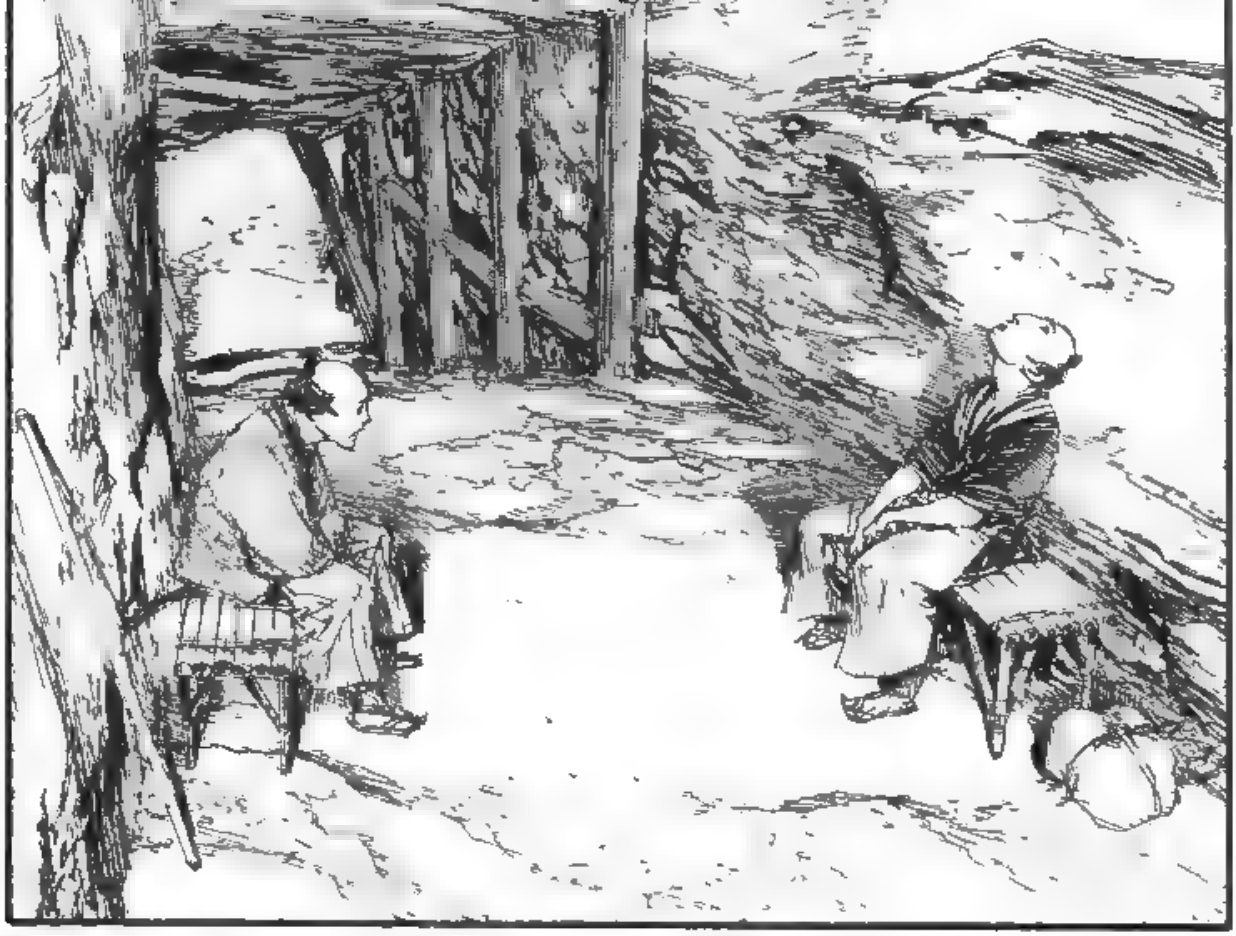
THE PLAN WAS TO DISGUISE OURSELVES, FOLLOW YOUR FRIENDS WHO WORK THIS HOLE...
...LEARN THE SHORTEST ROUTE TO EDO CASTLE...
...THEN GATHER OUR WEAPONS AND HEAD IN FOR REAL.
SHEESH, RIN!! COULDN'T YOU EVEN STOP THOSE BEG-GARS WHILE I WAS FIGHTING?
I'M SORRY! YOU'RE RIGHT-- TOTALLY.
BUT AT LEAST THEY RAN OUT-SIDE.
THAT'S BETTER THAN ALERTING THE GUARDS...
BETTER, NO-THING!
WHAT DO WE DO NOW?!
I GUESS WE'LL HAVE TO... FEEL OUR WAY...

THE CASTLE'S *THAT WAY*, ABOUT ONE *RI*.
BUT IF IT'S A *LABYRINTH*... OR THERE'RE *OBSTA-CLES*...
IF THE TUNNEL'S STRAIGHT, IT WON'T TAKE US ONE *KOKU*.
...IT COULD TAKE ALL DAY, OR MORE...
DŌA.
THERE WASN'T TIME EARLIER...
...BUT *PLEASE* PROMISE ME...
...IF *YORIKI* OR *DŌSHIN* TRY TO BLOCK US...
...THINK *FIRST* AND TRY TO *AVOID* A FIGHT, OKAY?

BUT... THIS MORNING... YOU SAID--
OF COURSE...
...IF WE CAN'T FIND A WAY, THEN IT'S NO HOLDS BARRED.
...BUT YOU'RE NOT BLESSED WITH UNENDING ENDUR-ANCE.
IF YOU'RE DOWN THERE HACKING AWAY NON-STOP--
BUT THIS IS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD!
YOU'RE AS STRONG AS A DEMON...
NON-SENSE! WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?!
RIN, YOU ARE SO TEDIOUS! DON'T YOU EVER GET SERIOUS?
I AM NOT TEDIOUS... AND I'M TOTALLY SERIOUS.
IF YOU GET INJURED, IT'S ALL OVER.
THE TŌSHU SAID KILLING'S OKAY AT TIMES LIKE THIS.
THE TŌSHU'S RIGHTER THAN YOU, RIN!
THAT'S NOT THE POIN--

...DŌA!
I HAVEN'T TOLD YOU, HAVE I? HOW I TRAVELED WITH ANOTSU KAGEHISA, JUST THE TWO OF US, FOR A LITTLE WHILE?
...EH?!
LIAR!
TRUE!
WHEN YOU GET BACK, JUST ASK HIM.
MOREOVER, WE WERE ON THE RUN.
AND ONCE, WHEN THEY ALMOST HAD US SURROUNDED...? YOUR TŌSHU-SAMA SAID THIS, A WHOLE LOT MORE DELIBERATE-LY THAN I...
..."THE GREATEST SAGE IS HE WHO AVOIDS BATTLE.
"HE WHO FIGHTS AND WINS COMES NEXT."

UNLIKE YOU, DŌA, I DON'T RESPECT ANOTSU KAGEHISA IN THE LEAST.
BUT AT THAT MOMENT, EVEN I THOUGHT, "WOW. SO THAT'S THE MEASURE OF A LEADER OF MEN."
THE TŌSHU SAID THAT...?
...UHHN... I GET IT.
IF THE TŌSHU SAYS SO, THEN I GUESS...
WELL, HE DIDN'T ACTUAL-LY SAY IT...
WHITE LIES DON'T COUNT.
TŌSHU! WATCH ME, YOU HEAR?!



THE BODY DETAIL'S STILL UP THERE.
TAKING THEIR TIME.

HOH?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
WAS HE ONE OF 'EM?
HECK. I CAN'T TELL THEM APART.
I-I'M SORRY!!
UWOH!
W-WHAT IS IT?!
S-SORRY, SIRS...
GOT A CATER-PILLAR DOWN MY BACK...
I'D QUIET DOWN SOME IF'N SOMEBODY HAD A LOOK...
EH HEH HEH
HUH?!
IMPUDENT RASCAL!

WHERE? HERE?
UHHM... HEEK! NOW IT'S ON MY BUTT...
KRACK
KRACK

SORTA LIKE THAT?
CLOSE ENOUGH. THANKS...
IT'S KINDA BORING.
IT'S NINPŌ. "KILL WITH KIND-NESS."
OH, PLEASE CARRY OUR BAGS...?
UHH... YES'M!
THAT GIRL COULD GET SCARY IF YOU RAN AWAY!
YOU COULD, TOO, MA'AM. YOU COULD, TOO...
TO BE CONTINUED...!

BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

art and story by

HIROAKI SAMURA

translation by **DANA LEWIS**

lettering and retouch by **TOMOKO SAITO**

cover colors by **RYAN HILL**

Interior back cover pinup by NATHAN FOX • Color back cover pinup by ROB GUILLORY

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MANJI

Immortal *rōnin*, vowed to protect Rin and aid her in her quest for revenge.

RIN

Last heir of the Mutenichi-*ryū dōjō* which was destroyed by the Ittō-*ryū*.

HABAKI KAGIMURA

Powerful *bangashira*, serving the shogun and seeking the secret of immortality.

DŌA

A small, brash Ittō-*ryū* warrior, quick on her feet and eager to brawl.

ISAKU

Dōa's trusted bodyguard, a hefty Ittō-*ryū* warrior arrested for a street fight Dōa started.

BURANDO

Deranged doctor and pioneer in *kessen-chu* transference.

THE STORY SO FAR

Infected by *kessen-chu*, mystical bloodworms which can heal all wounds and grant their host immortality, Manji's bloodthirst led to the capture and murder of his sister. To atone for this and for the 100 innocent people who died at his hand while he served a corrupt lord, Manji vowed to slay 1,000 evil men in exchange for the release of death.

Imprisoned in an underground cell beneath Edo Castle, Manji is an unwilling participant in Habaki Kagimura's regenerative *kessen-chu* experiments. Burando, Kagimura's lead doctor, is having some success, but all of his "improved patients" wind up crazier than he is. While searching for Manji and Isaku, Rin and Dōa stumble across a mountain of dead bodies and a simple-minded beggar who leads them to the "Badger Hole"—an entrance to the subterranean tunnel system that runs beneath Edo Castle and possibly to Kagimura's cruel prisons. After a violent false start, the ladies are now fully armed, ready to explore, and determined to find their missing friends.

designer **SCOTT COOK** editorial assistant **RYAN JORGENSEN**

editor **PHILIP SIMON** publisher **MIKE RICHARDSON**

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NEXT MONTH

Taking us back to one of the most harrowing *Blade of the Immortal* battles ever Nathan Fox's pinup in our next issue will link up with his Magatsu image in *this* issue (facing page) to form a kinetic vertical diptych You can see more of Nathan's work in current issues of *DMZ* Thanks Nathan! And congratulations to recently wed Rob Guillory (*Short Bus Superstars*) whose art graces the back cover of the comic you re holding now See you next month, when our vengeful ladies go deeper into the "Badger Hole" and come across a sadistic new villain

GLOSSARY

Bangashira: Head of the *banshu*.

Bangata: The castle watch.

Banshū: Officers serving under the shogun, usually assigned to Edo Castle to defend the shogun himself

Bugyō: A high-ranked samurai in charge of keeping the peace, with the help of the men under his command and volunteer "posse" members.

Daimyo: Ruler of a feudal fiefdom.

Itto-ryu: The radical sword school of Anotsu Kagehisa

Ienari-sama: Tokugawa Ienari, the eleventh Tokugawa shogun (1773 to 1841)

Kessen-chu: The "sacred bloodworms " A person infected by them cannot die but feels pain like a mortal.

Kan: Unit of measurement approximately two meters (six feet)

Kitamachi-sama: The *kita-machibugyo* There were two *machi-bugyō* who took turns administering justice and police affairs in the civilian districts of Edo. *Kitamachi-sama* refers to the northern *machi bugyo*

Machi-bugyo: one of the top governing positions in Edo, a magistrate with the combined powers of a mayor and chief of police This position was held in monthly rotation by two senior Tokugawa vassals who were in charge of administration maintaining the peace, and enforcing the law in Edo Their rule extended only to commoners, as samurai in Edo were controlled by their *daimyo* and his officers. The *machi bugyo* had an administrative staff and a small force of armed policemen.

Mutenichi-ryū: The sword school led by Rin's father (now deceased), destroyed by Anotsu Kagehisa

Ryū: A sword school

Tanuki: Often called a "raccoon dog," this animal is similar to a raccoon. a member of the badger family and common throughout Japan

Tōshu: Leader master

Yoriki: Ranked below the *machi-bugyo* and above the *doshin*, the *yoriki* were high-ranking police officers in Edo

Zukin: A scarf Used in Japan not only as headgear, but also to wrap and carry small packages

ABOUT THE SWASTIKA

The main character in *Blade of the Immortal* Manji has taken the "crux gammata" as both his name and his personal symbol This symbol is also known as the *swastika*, a name derived from the Sanskrit *svastika* (meaning "welfare " from *su*—"well" + *asti*—"he is"). As a symbol of prosperity and good fortune. the *swastika* was widely used throughout the ancient world (for example, appearing often on Mesopotamian coinage) including North and South America and has been used in Japan as a symbol of Buddhism since ancient times. To be precise, the symbol generally used by Japanese Buddhists is the *sauvastika* which moves in a counterclockwise direction, and is called the *manji* in Japanese The *sauvastika* generally stands for night, and often for magical practices The *swastika*, whose arms point in a clockwise direction, is generally considered a solar symbol. It was this version (the *hakenkreuz*) that was perverted by the Nazis. It is important that readers understand that the *swastika* has ancient and honorable origins, and it is those that apply to this story, which takes place in the 18th century (ca. 1782-3). *There is no anti-Semitic or pro-Nazi meaning behind the use of the symbol in this story. Those meanings did not exist until after 1910*

ABOUT THE TRANSLATION

The Artwork. The author of *Blade of the Immortal* requested that we make an effort to avoid mirror-imaging his artwork Some manga are first copied in a mirror-image in order to facilitate the left-to-right reading of the pages. However, Mr Samura decided that he would rather see his pages reversed via the technique of cutting up the panels and repasting them in reverse order While we feel that this often leads to problems in panel-to-panel continuity we place primary importance on the wishes of the creator Therefore most of *Blade of the Immortal* has been produced using the "cut and paste" technique There are, of course some sequences where it was impossible to do this and mirror-imaged panels or pages were used instead

The Sound Effects & Dialogue: Since some of Mr Samura's sound effects are integral parts of the artwork, the decision was made to leave those in their original Japanese When it was crucial to the understanding of the panel that the sound effect be in English however, Mr Samura chose to redraw the panel We hope readers will view the un-retouched sound effects as essential portions of Mr. Samura's extraordinary artwork. In addition, Mr Samura s treatment of dialogue is quite different from that featured in average samurai manga and is considered to be one of the things that has made *Blade* such a huge hit in Japan. Mr Samura has mixed a variety of linguistic styles in this fantasy story where some characters speak in the mannered style of old Japan, while others speak as if they were street-corner punks from a bad area of modern-day Tokyo. The anachronistic s ang used by some of the characters in the English translation reflects the unusual mix of speech patterns from the original Japanese text.

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DARK
HORSE
MANGA
BLADE OF THE
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129
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BADGER HOLE
2 of 4
HIROAKI SAMURA
BLADE
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無限の住人

BADGER HOLE

-part two-

TOWA.
TOWA!

TOWA, OPEN YOUR--
DON'T SHAKE HER!
IT'S JUST A CONCUSSION. SHE'LL COME TO IN TIME.
A ZUKIN LAYERED WITH AN IRON PLATE. NOT BAD... FOR A TOY DREAMED UP BY BANDITS.
YET SHE WAS UNABLE TO TELL AT A GLANCE IF IT WOULD TURN MY WEAPON.
INEXPERIENCED IS THE BEST I CAN SAY.

TO FIGHT THAT WAY?!
IMPOSSI-BLE!
BUT TO USE IT IN BATTLE?
YES... IT'S TRUE. LOOKING AGAIN...
...YOU CAN TELL IT'S ONE *HEAVY* AXE.
JUDGE... AT A GLANCE?

NOT A MAN ALIVE CAN TRACK TOWA WHEN SHE GETS WITHIN A KAN.
OF COURSE, I'VE NEVER FOUGHT HER MYSELF...
...BUT THAT'S TRUE OF EVERYONE SHE'S EVER BATTLED.
OR AT LEAST, UNTIL *NOW.*
AND SO, THE *SHOCK!*
NO *CON-TACT!* NOT *ONCE!*

IT'S A BIG WORLD!
YET... THIS MAN! WITH ALL HIS BRILLIANT TECHNIQUE. NOT ONCE DID HE ATTACK.
"YOU FOOLS AREN'T WORTH KILLING. BEGONE!" THAT CONTEMPT ONLY RILED TOWA MORE.
WHEN I CLOSE IN, HE BRUSHES ME AWAY.
MOCK-ING ME.
BUT TO CHARGE IN, AT THIS DISTANCE...?
HE'LL BRING THAT THING STRAIGHT DOWN!
CORRECT CHOICE... EXCEPT FOR HIM.
YES! WHO WOULD THINK IT?!
EIYAAA!

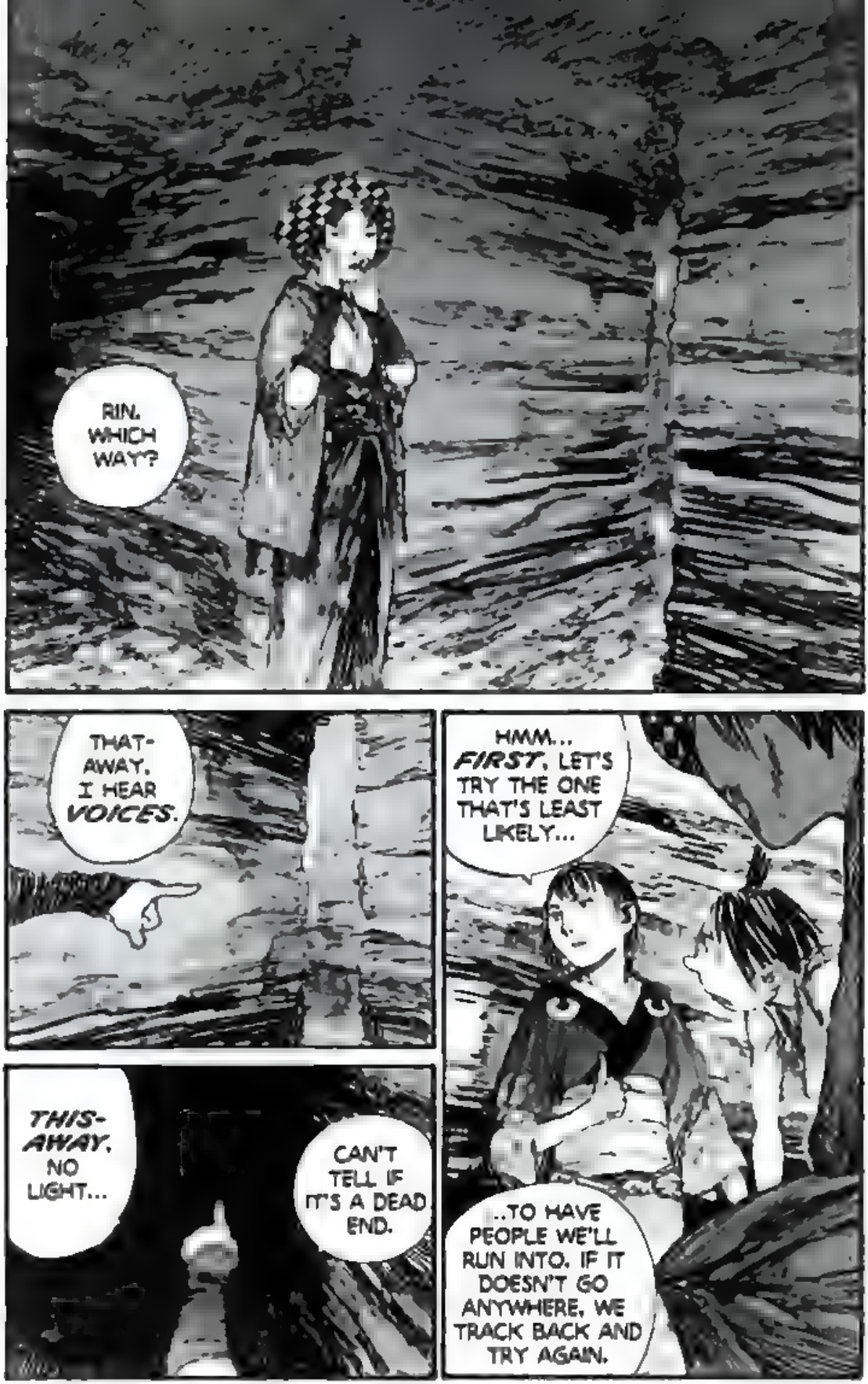
WIELDING THAT MASSIVE WEAPON...
...SO SWIFT AND SO NIMBLE!
YOU WON'T FIGHT...?
EH? N-NO, NO...

I-I CAN'T KILL... PEOPLE.
HER DEFEAT IS... OUR DEFEAT.
AWFUL PRONUN-CIATION.
A HALF-BAKED MISSION-ARY, PLAYING BANDIT?
SURELY SHE DIDN'T *LEARN* THAT SWORD-WORK?
N-NO, SIR.
TOWA'S SWORD...? AMATEUR.
BUT CATCHING BIRDS IN TREES...OR HUNTING *TANUKI*?
BEST IN THE *KOTAN*.
AH HA! HA! *BRILLIANT!*
LEARNING TO MOVE LIKE THAT FROM *LIFE!*

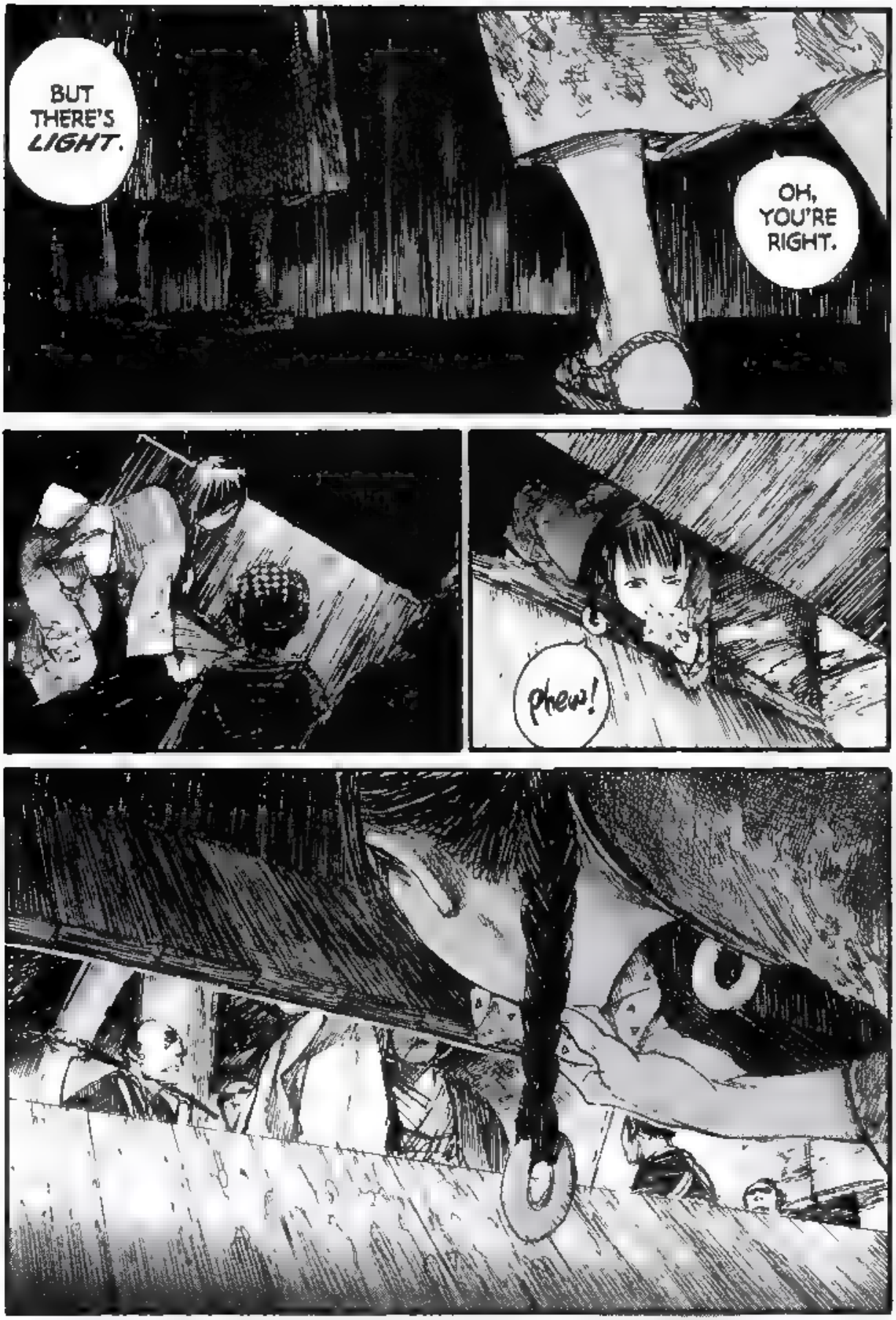
IF YOU GET BORED BEING THIEVES, COME *HERE*.
WE'RE THE LAST PLACE OUTSIDERS LIKE YOU WASH UP.
I'LL TEACH YOU THE WAYS OF POWER.

WOW. WHAT A COOL THING TO SAY.
THE TŌSHU'S ALWAYS COOL.
'COURSE. I JUST HEARD IT FROM ISAKU.
I WAS OUT COLD.
MYSTE-RIOUS? HOW SO?
THE TŌSHU'S A COOL AND MYSTERI-OUS MAN.
WHEN I LOOK DEEP INTO HIS EYES...
...IT'S LIKE MY HEAD'S ALL FLASHING...AND WORDS POP OUT THAT I NEVER USE. NOW THAT'S MYSTERIOUS...
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE HE CLOB-BERED YOU?
ANYWAY, YOU GOTTA HAVE PHI-LOSOPHY WHEN YOU KILL PEOPLE. LIKE IN ITTŌ-RYŪ.
YOU GET THAT-- RIGHT, RIN?
NO, I DON'T!

THAT KIND OF THINKING...
...IT'S LIKE SAYING IDEOLOGY MAKES KILLING OKAY!
OH, RIGHT, RIN.
DIDN'T YOU TELL ME YOU'VE KILLED PEOPLE, TOO?
...I HAVE... YES, I HAVE, OKAY?!
BUT COMPARED TO YOU, THE WEIGHT... THE BOUNDARIES...
LOOK, CAN WE STOP TALKING ABOUT IT?
HRMM... SHE'S RIGHT. IT'S ME WHO'S MIXED UP.
GOING ON LIKE THAT. WHEN MANJI'S IN DANGER...


RIN. WHICH WAY?
THAT-AWAY. I HEAR VOICES.
HMM... FIRST, LET'S TRY THE ONE THAT'S LEAST LIKELY...
THIS-AWAY. NO LIGHT...
CAN'T TELL IF IT'S A DEAD END.
..TO HAVE PEOPLE WE'LL RUN INTO. IF IT DOESN'T GO ANYWHERE, WE TRACK BACK AND TRY AGAIN.

WOW!
PITCH BLACK!
:kcoff: MORE THAN THAT...
...DOESN'T SOMETHING STINK?
:kcoff: :kcoff:
YECH! WHAT'S THIS SMELL?!
THONK
OUCH!
GROSS!
HUH? A DEAD END?
NO WAY!


BUT THERE'S *LIGHT*.
OH, YOU'RE RIGHT.
Phew!

UH-OH! GUARDS. LOTS!
SEVEN... EIGHT... NINE...
NO! THAT MANY?
YUP. MAYBE MORE AGAINST THIS WALL...
HN?
!

...whew...
HM?
WHAT'S THAT DOING THERE?
HEY! HIKO-ZŌ!
YOU DROPPED YOUR HAND CLOTH.
ME? I GOT MINE ...SEE?

DUMMY DUMMY DUMMY!
TAKA-BATAKE. IS THAT YOUR CLOTH IN THERE?
DIDN'T BRING ONE.
MAYBE THERE'S SOMEONE ON THE OTHER SIDE...
DŌA. WHA--
RIGHT. WE'LL JUST HAVE TO KILL THEM ALL.
DŌA, THAT'S SO WRONG!
THE SOONER THE BETTER, RIN!
GRP!

FIRST STRIKE, CERTAIN VICTO--
NGMFF!
PLEASE, JUST UNTIL THEY SPOT US? OKAY, DŌA?
MAYBE THE BEGGARS ARE GOOFING OFF?
THAT'D BE MY GUESS.
ROT OUT MY NOSE...
FWAP FWAP

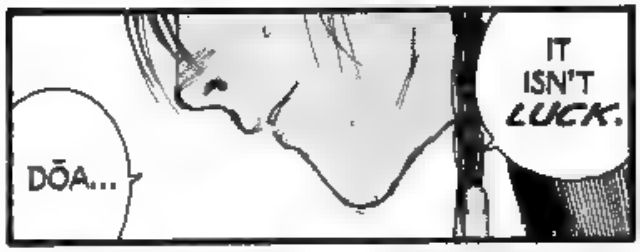
HUH?!
!!
HEY! WHAT'S UP?
OH, MAN! IT'S CRAZY UP TOP...
...AT THE KAJIBASHI GATE...
...SO, JUST FOR NOW...
SERI-OUS?! IN THAT CASE...

BUT WHAT ABOUT DOWN HERE?
HABAKI-DONO SAID TO LEAVE THREE MEN, AT LEAST...
YEAH!
DAMN... LET'S GO.
.....
.....
.....?
OH?! SORRY!
RIN... CAN'T... BREATHE...

IT'S LIKE... THEY GOT UP AND LEFT.

LUCKY! AWESOME!

THE TABLE'S SET!
IT'S ALL IN PLACE! ALL THE INGREDI-ENTS.


DŌA...
IT ISN'T LUCK.

INGREDIENTS? TABLE? MISO SOUP?!
HUHH?!

GET BACK! BACK!!
WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU ARE? CONFOUND YOU!

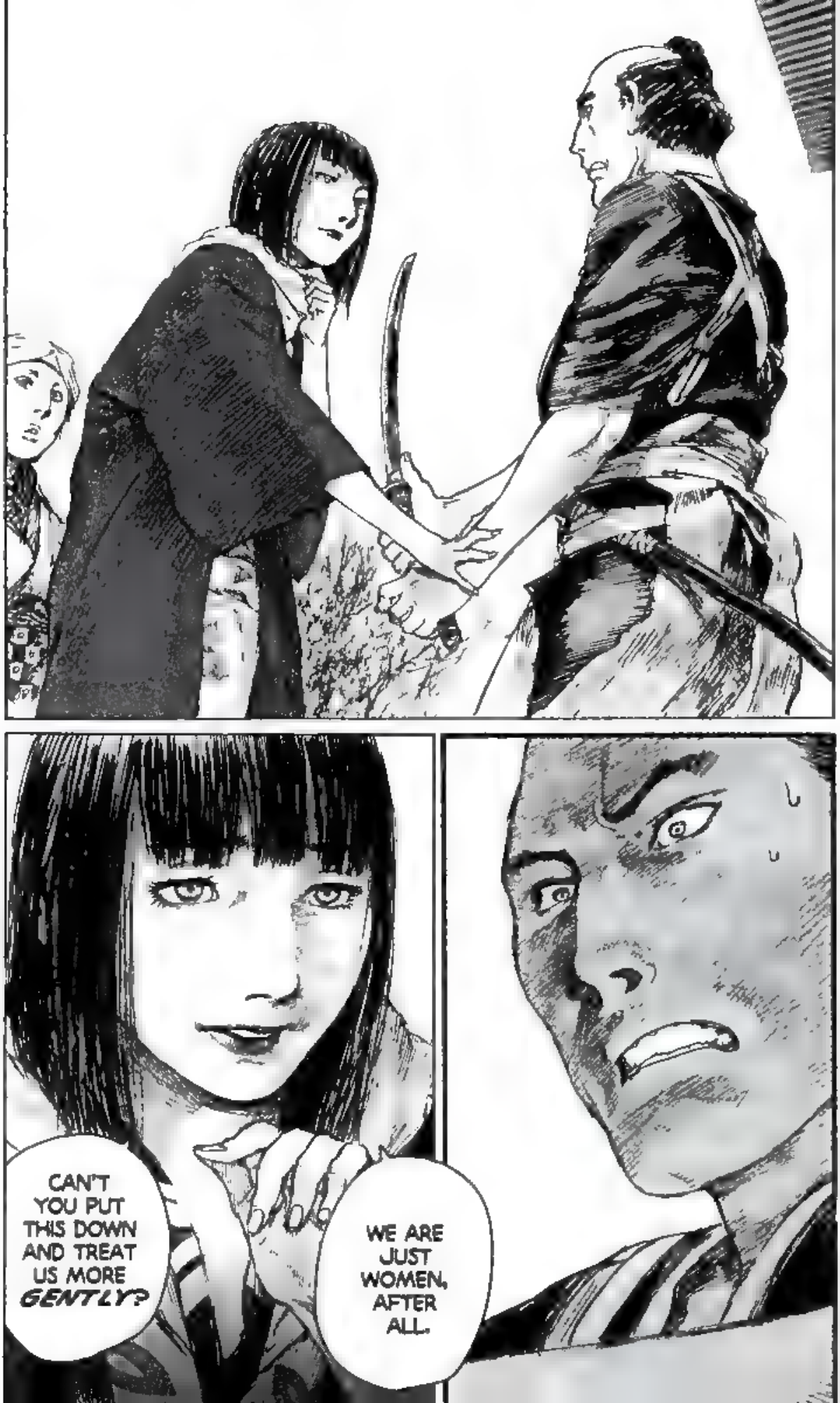
O-SAMURAI-SAMA!
GIVE ME BACK MY HUS-BAND!
IDIOT!
I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOUR DAMN HUSBAND IS!
LIAR! THE O-BUGYO-SAMA--
--HE SAID, "YOUR DADDY'S IN THE CASTLE!"
SHUT UP! SHUT UP!!
SHE'S RIGHT! IT'S TRUE!
KITAMACHI-SAMA SAID IF WE WANT TO FIND OUR HUSBANDS, ASK THE BAN-GATA! HE LOOKED SORRY, HE DID!

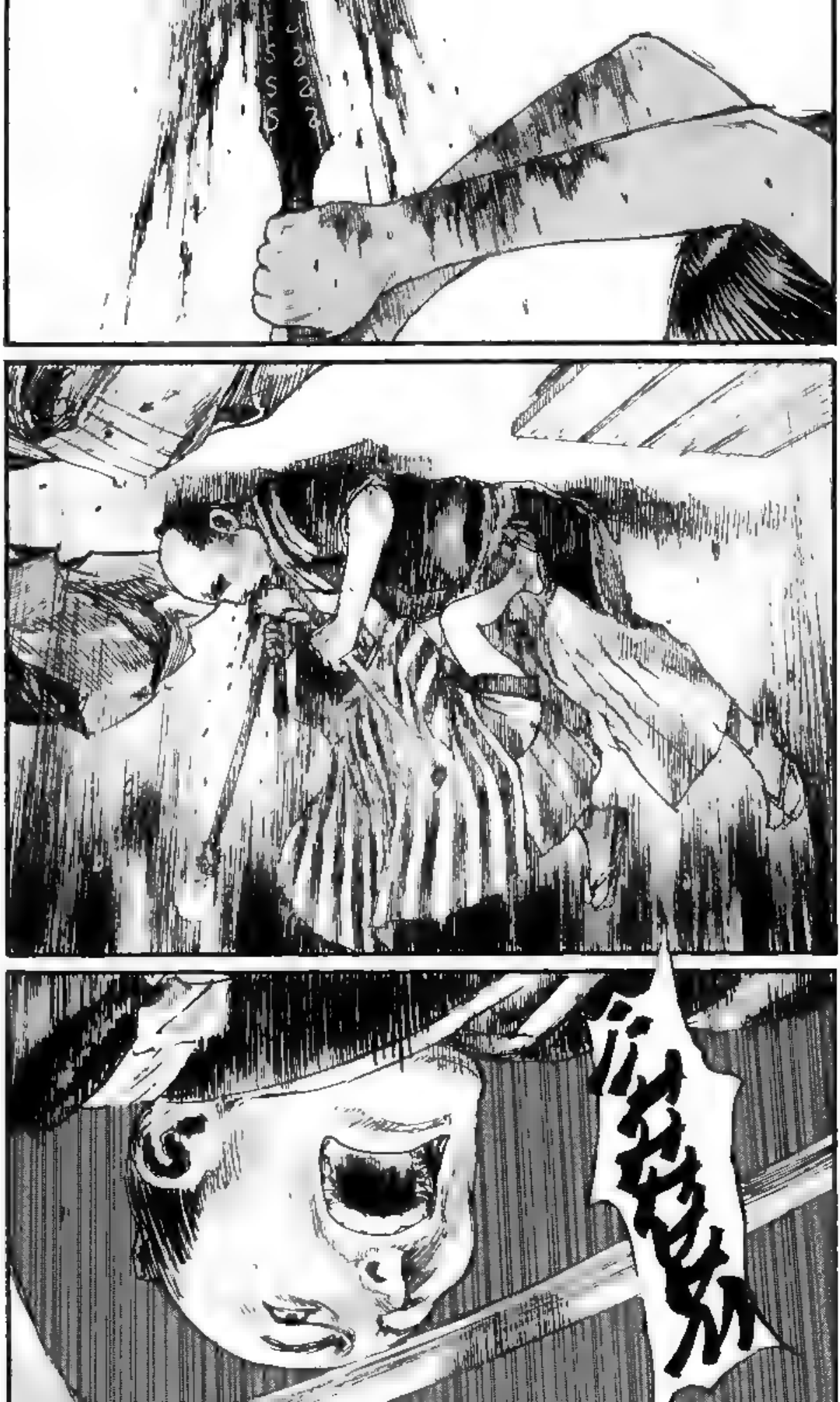
SHUT UP, YA SAY? DEVILS! MON-STERS!
WE ALL KNOW WHAT YER HIDING, WE DO! I SAW'S IT WITH MY OWN EYES!
IN THE BAMBOO GROVE OVER YONDER!
WITH ALL THEM OTHER MEN, MY GRAND-BOY... CORPSES ALL!
I SA--
FWAM!
I SAW'S HIM!
OH, HOW HE CHANG-ED... THE CROWS HAIN'T PECKED HIM AT ALL...
...BUT HIS SWOL-LEN FACE LOOKED UP AT ME LIKE...
...LIKE A GHOST...
"GRANNY! GRANNY! I'M INNO-CENT!"
"WHAT KHARMA DONE BROUGHT ME TO THIS PASS?!"

UNTIL MY GRAND-BOY'S CLEARED OF HIS UNJUST FATE...
...THIS OLD HAG NEITHER GOES TO HEAVEN NOR WALKS THE EARTH!
SHE DRAGS YOU ALL TO HELL!!
WAK
UOOHHH!!
THD THD THD
GUSHA!
GUSHOOO

WHAT ARE YOU DAWDL-ING FOR?!
OH! MURAUCHI-SAMA!
KILL A FEW AND SHUT 'EM UP!
UHR! Y- YES, SIR!
SHING!
HECK!
PLUNK!
LAW BREAK-ERS! BEGONE!
OR I'LL TURN YOU TO RUST ON MY SWORD!

KILL US-- AND BE THE FIRST TO BLEMISH THE PEACE OF IENARI-SAMA'S REIGN.
I DOUBT THE GOOD GENTLEMEN WISH THAT FOR THEIR LORD.
HEAVENS, NO ONE'S ASKING YOU TO LET US INTO THE CASTLE.
WH- WHAT...?
BUT IF WE ARE NOT TO HAVE EVEN A GLIMPSE OF OUR MEN...
...AT LEAST... AT LEAST TELL US WHAT HAS BEFALLEN THEM WITHIN, OR WE CANNOT LEAVE.


CAN'T YOU PUT THIS DOWN AND TREAT US MORE GENTLY?
WE ARE JUST WOMEN, AFTER ALL.



EASY TO FIGHT IN, SO SHE PUT IT BACK ON
SO FULL OF HERSELF...
I WANNA GO HOME!
WELL, I CAN GO AT IT, TOO!
TO BE CONTINUED...!

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Bangata: The castle watch.

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Banshū: Officers serving under the shogun, usually assigned to Edo Castle to defend the shogun himself.

Bugyō: A high-ranked samurai in charge of keeping the peace, with the help of the men under his command and volunteer "posse" members.

Edo: Capitol of pre-modern Japan. Later renamed Tokyo.

Emma: Buddhist god of death, also known as Enma.

Ezo: Hokkaido and the other islands north of Japan. At the time, they were still controlled by indigenous *Ainu* peoples and were a perilous back door into closed Japan for foreign goods and people.

Ezokko: A child of *Ezo*, the old name for *Hokkaido*.

Itto-ryu: The radical sword school of Anotsu Kagehisa.

Kessen-chu: The "sacred bloodworms." A person infected by them cannot die but feels pain like a mortal.

Mugai-ryū: Sword school of the Akagi assassins; literally, "without form."

Mutenichi-ryu: The sword school led by Rin's father (now deceased), destroyed by Anotsu Kagehisa.

Ryū: A sword school.

Ryo: A high value gold coin.

Rōyashiki: Jail.

Tataki: A form of punishment by (traditionally) flogging an offender either fifty or one hundred times with a cane. These beatings were prohibited for samurai, priests, and women.

ABOUT THE TRANSLATION

The Artwork. The author of *Blade of the Immortal* requested that we make an effort to avoid mirror-imaging his artwork. Some manga are first copied in a mirror-image in order to facilitate the left-to-right reading of the pages. However, Mr. Samura decided that he would rather see his pages reversed via the technique of cutting up the panels and repasting them in reverse order. While we feel that this often leads to problems in panel-to-panel continuity, we place primary importance on the wishes of the creator. Therefore, most of *Blade of the Immortal* has been produced using the "cut and paste" technique. There are, of course, some sequences where it was impossible to do this, and mirror-imaged panels or pages were used instead.

The Sound Effects & Dialogue. Since some of Mr. Samura's sound effects are integral parts of the artwork, the decision was made to leave those in their original Japanese. When it was crucial to the understanding of the panel that the sound effect be in English, however, Mr. Samura chose to redraw the panel. We hope readers will view the un-retouched sound effects as essential portions of Mr. Samura's extraordinary artwork. In addition, Mr. Samura's treatment of dialogue is quite different from that featured in average samurai manga and is considered to be one of the things that has made *Blade* such a huge hit in Japan. Mr. Samura has mixed a variety of linguistic styles in this fantasy story, where some characters speak in the mannered style of old Japan, while others speak as if they were street corner punks from a bad area of modern-day Tokyo. The anachronistic slang used by some of the characters in the English translation reflects the unusual mix of speech patterns from the original Japanese text.

FACING PAGE: Part 2 of Nathan Fox's "Magatsu versus Gilchi" vertical diptych (find Part 1 in the back of *Blade* #129).

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DARK HORSE MANGA
BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL
130
$2.99 US
BADGER HOLE
3 of 4
HIROAKI SAMURA
BLADE
OF THE IMMORTAL
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無限の住人

BADGER HOLE
-part three-

...AND TOMORROW MORNING, YOU *SHOW* THOSE WOMEN OUTSIDE THE *BUGYŌSHO* AND *RŌ-YASHIKI*.
I'LL TELL YOU WHERE LATER...
IN A *BAMBOO GROVE*?!
I WANT YOU TO WHISPER THAT THE BODIES CAME FROM EDO CASTLE.

THAT'LL BE ENOUGH. WITHIN THE DAY...
...RUMORS WILL RACE ACROSS EDO.
THE WOMEN...
...WHO SEE THE CORPSES WILL RUSH THE NEAREST GATES. KAJIBASHIMON, SUKIYABASHIMON... THAT'S MY AIM.
TOMORROW, DŌA AND I STORM THE BADGER HOLE.
OF COURSE WE'LL SEE GUARDS LONG BEFORE WE REACH THE CASTLE...
.....
.....
...BUT IF WE CAN GET THE WOMEN TO GATHER AND CAUSE A DISTURB-ANCE...
...THEY'LL HAVE TO SEND MORE TROOPS OVER... AND THE BADGER HOLE WILL BE CLEAR.
MY ONLY WORRY IS, THERE MIGHT BE A RIOT.
IF THE GATE WARDENS THINK THERE'S AN INSUR-RECTION, IT COULD TURN BLOODY IN AN INSTANT.

SO I WANT YOU THERE, HYAKURIN, TO PREVENT THAT... TO LEAD THE WOMEN.
...TALL ORDER.
AFTER WHAT I SAID THIS AFTER-NOON...
...I'M SORRY.
IT'S NOT THAT, KID. I'M JUST SAYING IT MIGHT NOT GO THE WAY YOU WANT.
...JUST BECAUSE THERE'S A RUCKUS AT SOME GATES?
YOU THINK THEY'LL EMPTY OUT YOUR "BADGER HOLE"...
EDO CASTLE'S CHOCK FULL OF O-SAMURAI...
...AND HALF OF THEM AREN'T EVEN ON DUTY. THEY'VE GOT TIME TO BURN.
I'VE BEEN... THINKING.

MAYBE ONLY A FEW PEOPLE IN THE CASTLE EVEN KNOW...
...ABOUT THE... IMMORTALITY EXPERIMENT.
THE TOP GUYS JUST HEAR RUMORS.
LOOK AT HOW BAD IT'S GOTTEN.
DRAGGING ALL THOSE PRISONERS INTO THE CASTLE, ALL WALKS OF LIFE...
THEY CAN'T ALL APPROVE, FROM THE GO-RŌJŪ ON DOWN.
AND IN THE END, THE KEY...
...IS MANJI, AND HIS IMMORTAL BODY.
"THEY HAD GIICHI BRING HIM IN.
"JUST ONE MAN FROM KAGIMURA'S OWN MUGAI-RYŪ."

SO IF THERE'S A DISTURB-ANCE ABOUT THE EXPERI-MENT...
...WOULDN'T THE PLAYERS RUSH TO PUT IT DOWN?
SO THE ONLY PEOPLE ACTUALLY INVOLVED ARE KAGI-MURA...
TENI, WHO DO THE REAL WORK...
...AND THE GUARDS FOR THE PRISONERS. THAT'S MY CONCLUSION.
EXTREME... BUT LOGICAL.
LISTEN HERE, RIN-CHAN.
AS I HEAR IT, YOUR PLAN...
...GOES SWIM-MINGLY AS LONG AS THAT HOLE REALLY LEADS TO EDO CASTLE.

HAVE YOU THOUGHT WHAT YOU'LL DO IF IT DOESN'T?
...YOU'RE RIGHT, HYAKU-RIN...
...AND ABOUT THAT-- THAT BIGGEST PIECE...
...TO BE HONEST, I'M NOT CONFIDENT.
IT'S JUST INTUITION.
BUT THIS TIME, FOR ONCE, I'M LEAVING IT TO INTUITION.
THIS IS A WOMEN'S BATTLE.
FOR A FIGHT LIKE THIS ONE...
...HOW CAN IT LEAD US WRONG?

GIICHI TRIED TO STOP ME.
I'M SORRY. IT'S A GAMBLE.
WOMEN'S INTUITION, MM...? HEH!
BUT HYAKURIN, YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I CAN *TRUST*.
I'M GLAD YOU ASKED ME.
SILLY CHILD. I'M *GLAD*.

NYAAH HAH HAH!
MORE AN' MORE AN' MORE.
O-SAMURAI-SAMA! MY HUS-BAND...?!
NOT ALL OVER AGAIN?!
GIMME A BREAK!
WAAH! I WANT MY DADDY!
THE OTHER SIDE'S FILLING UP, TOO.
IT'S OUT OF CONTROL.

NOW YOU GO GET YOUR MEN, LITTLE RIN!
THERE'S WATER UNDER HERE.
I KNOW! I'M NOT DUMB!
BUT IT'S FREEZING.
YOU'RE AN EZOKKO, RIGHT?

WE DON'T WEAR RAGS IN EZO!
SHSH! KEEP IT DOWN.
PRRR
PRRR
KOONNGG.
HN?

TINA-
AHH!
.....
.....
.....
...?
AH!
STOP!
OUCH!
OUCH!
OUCH!
OUCH!!!
FWIPP
FWIPP

COME QUICK! WE CAUGHT SOMEBODY!!
HEY! YOU GOTTA SEE THIS, FUKIYA-- AND CALL SAKURA-SAMA!

EH? NO WAY! REALLY?

AAAH! HAH HAH!

OH, THANK YOU! THANK YOU! AAAH HAH HAH!
I'M SO GLAD YOU FELL FOR IT!
AND, MY-- LITTLE LADIES.
HEAVENS! TWO GIRLS AND A BEGGAR? THIS DEEP?
YOU CAN'T GET IN HERE JUST BY SHOWING OFF SOME LEG. I'M IMPRESSED, GALS!

TO EXPLAIN...
OH, SORRY.
STEPPING *HERE*, NO PROBLEM!
IT FALLS WHEN YOU STEP ON THE *MIDDLE* PLANKS.
OF COURSE, THEY TELL YOU THAT AT THE CHECK-POINT...
...BUT FOR SOME REASON, *YOU* LADIES DIDN'T *KNOW*.
I- I'M SORRY...
I FOR-GOT...
QW!!

NO GOOD. NO GOOD. DON'T BELIEVE A WORD.
CARRYING A BLADE LIKE THIS? OH? THE TINY GIRL, TOO?
DON'T TOUCH ME, FREAK!!
RRNGG...
I THOUGHT UP THIS TRAP, BUT...
YOU KNOW, I'M REALLY HAPPY.
WASTING TAX MONEY, THEY SAID! AAHH HAH HAH!
...NO INTRUDERS! NOT A ONE.
.....
.....

SAKURA-SAMA!
SIX CUT DOWN, TWO UN-CONSCIOUS--
--BETWEEN HERE AND THE GATE!
...SERIOUS CRIME, HM?
WHAT?!!
WHAT'LL WE DO WITH THEM?!
HMM...

AH! YES!
HOW ABOUT TATAKI? FOR ALL OF THEM?!
WHAT?!
SAKURA-SAMA, I...
HNN?
THAT'S... NOT WHAT I MEANT.
HE MEANS, SHOULD HABAKI-DONO SEE THEM BEFORE THE RŌYASHIKI GETS THEM...?
AND BESIDES, THEY'RE WOMEN. TATAKI ISN'T MEANT FOR--
RULES FOR UP-STAIRS, RIGHT?!
THIS IS THE DARK SIDE. NO PRYING EYES HERE!

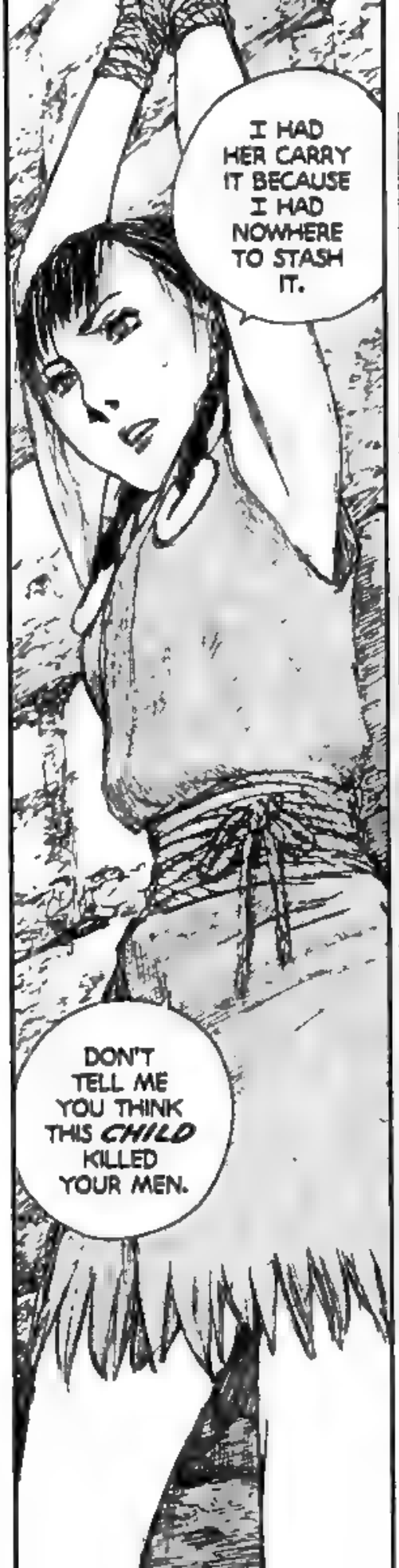
THE LASS WHO LOOKS LIKE A LEADER-- FORTY!
LITTLE GIRLS WITH BLOODY BLADES-- FORTY!
AND TWENTY FOR THE PORTER. SOUND GOOD?
WHY ME...?

.....
.....

HM?

WAIT !!
SO, SET IT UP!

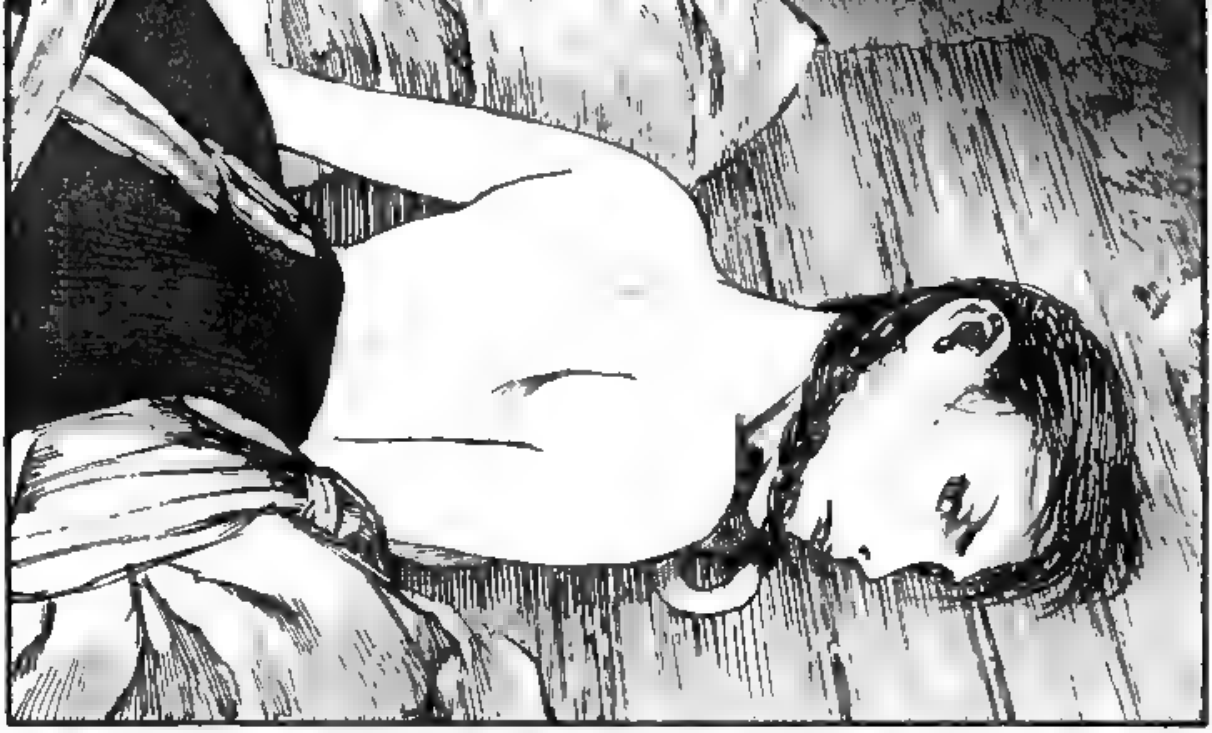
I'LL TAKE ALL THE LASHES.
?!
NO! DO YOU UNDERST--
WHAT ?!
WOH!
AND WHY MIGHT THAT BE?
THAT MAN...AS YOU SAY, JUST A PORTER.
I FORCED HIM TO COME WITH ME.
THE GIRL SEES WELL IN THE DARK. THE BLOOD-STAINED BLADE ISN'T EVEN HERS.


I HAD HER CARRY IT BECAUSE I HAD NOWHERE TO STASH IT.
DON'T TELL ME YOU THINK THIS *CHILD* KILLED YOUR MEN.

...DID THEM *YOUR-SELF*, MM?

EVEN *SO*, IT'S NOT OUR PLACE, HERE AND NOW...
...TO SET HER SENTENCE, *INCLUD-ING TATAKI*.
JUST *SHUT UP*, SHIMURA.

ISN'T THIS WONDERFUL? ISN'T IT?! A HUNDRED LASHES ON A BEAUTIFUL BABE!
YESSS!! I'M SO GLAD THEY DIDN'T SEND ME UPSTAIRS!



AND NOW THIS! NO CURSES-- JUST THAT COLD GLARE.
OH, VERY NICE. SUCH WHITE SKIN!

HN?
IF I ENDURE THIS TATAKI...
...THEN OUR SENTENCE IS OVER...

SO TEDI-OUS. I DON'T UNDER-STAND IT.
WHY ON EARTH DO THEY BAN TATAKI FOR WOMEN?

...PROM-ISE ME.

...AND YOU WILL RELEASE US ALL WITHOUT TURNING US IN.
WE'LL LEAVE OUR WEAPONS, OF COURSE.
.....
.....
.....
A HUNDRED LASHES FOR SIX DEAD MEN, HUH?
DOESN'T ADD UP, BUT...
...WHY NOT? YOU HAVE MY WORD... FOR THOSE TWO.
...!
AHAH HAH HAH!
YOU ARE THE DUMB ONE!
AFTER A HUNDRED TATAKI, DID YOU REALLY THINK YOU'D BE ALIVE?
KAKK!
HRK!

CHOK!
NGGH!
RIN!
YOU... STINKING ANIMALS!
I'LL KILL YOU ALL!!
TUT TUT. HOW UNCOUTH. IT'S THE LAW.

OZU!
KRAK!
HAH HAH HAH! JUST DES-SERTS!
S-SAKURA-SAMA...?
GRNF!
AHN!

IT'S BAD ENOUGH WITH A WHIP-- BUT A SWORD?!
HIT HER THAT HARD A HUNDRED TIMES, SHE'LL--
TUT! SINCE WHEN DO WE CODDLE CRIM-INALS?
BUT DON'T WORRY! DON'T THEY SAY...
...WOMEN CAN TAKE MORE PAIN THAN MEN?
RIGHT?
TWO?!
GUH!?

HAH HAH HAH HAH HAH!
SO SORRY. NO WHIP, NO ONE COUNTING...
I'M AFRAID IT'S A BIT HARSHER THAN USUAL.
BUT IT'S NO PROBLEM.
IF YOU DIE TOO SOON, THE GIRL CAN HAVE THE REST. DON'T LIKE THAT?
THEN CHOKE OUT YOUR STOMACH FLUIDS, COUGH UP BLOOD, DISLOCATE YOUR SHOULDERS...
...BUT JUST MAKE SURE YOUR HEART KEEPS BEATING. EHH HEH HEH!

KRAKK!
KRAKK!
BWA HAH HAH HAH HAH!
RIN!
RIN!
FWITCH
FWITCH
GTCH!
GRTCH!
HRNN-GG6...
!
.....
.....
.....
...WHAT'S THAT NOISE?

.....
.....?
...UUNG...
HCK!
RNG!
WHA...
WHAT...?
WHAT'S THAT AWFUL... SOUND?!
TO BE CONTINUED...!

BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

art, story, and front cover by

HIROAKI SAMURA

translation by **DANA LEWIS**

lettering and retouch by **TOMOKO SAITO**

cover colors by **RYAN HILL**

Interior back cover pinup by VASILIS LOLOS • Color back cover pinup by ZACHARY BALDUS

A note from Studio Proteus founder, TOREN SMITH

The first time I cracked open an issue of *Afternoon* and saw *Blade of the Immortal* I knew we had to publish it over here. Samura was a weak comics artist at the time, but his drawing skill was still mind-blowing. Having seen how quickly an artist can grow with a diet of regular work (being around Adam Warren gave me a personal experience) I knew he'd settle in and get very, very good indeed.

But there was a catch. Speaking to Samura, he was dubious about flopping his art. Since this was back in the "Dark Ages," when retailers and distributors were wary of unflopped manga, we didn't have much choice. Still, initially he refused. Later, after the first tankobon had come out, I sat down with it and partway through had a realization. As his layout and storytelling skills had matured, he had moved to an unusual style: almost all of his panels were rectangular. For an idea of how odd this is, grab any manga off your shelf and compare. I made a few photocopies of his pages and pasted them up with the panels unreversed, but the order of the panels reversed. It worked. Studio Proteus put together a sequence of about ten pages and sent them off to Samura, and he was intrigued. While he had done some work early on that was not amenable to this technique, he suggested that he'd redraw a few panels here and there as needed. I knew we could trim bleeds and if I kept sharp while doing the rewrite I could move the readers along correctly with strategic repositioning of the word balloons and tweaking the dialogue. Except for a few cases where I got brain fade and screwed up, I think it worked pretty well. Hey, it's tough to read each panel, knowing it will be unflopped, and yet reordered on the page! For the first couple volumes I actually cut and pasted each page, but eventually I was able to do it in my head, on the fly. All of my mistakes were corrected in the trade collections, and after Tomoko came on board, there were essentially none, since she kept an eagle eye on this.

Blade has its ups and downs, but overall it's one of the best series I ever worked on. Samura really is a genius, and his artwork has gotten better and better. His ability to control a tone using just a pencil is almost superhuman, as you can see from his pinups and illustration-style art. The vast cast of characters was really fun to work with, and his strong sense of character made translation and rewriting a pleasure. (If I had to choose a favorite character, it would be Hyakurin.)

I've been blessed to work on some very fine manga indeed, but I have to put *Blade of the Immortal* in my top ten. It was hard to move off the series when I did, but at the time I really had no choice. Fortunately, it's chugged along just fine without me. Having top talent like Tomoko Saito and Dana Lewis working on it pretty much guaranteed the end result would be superb, and it has been. Thanks to all the editors, designers, and others who have worked on *Blade*, they've all done a great job.

—Toren Smith, September 2007

art by TOMOKO SAITO

designer **SCOTT COOK** editorial assistant **RYAN JORGENSEN**

editor **PHILIP SIMON** publisher **MIKE RICHARDSON**

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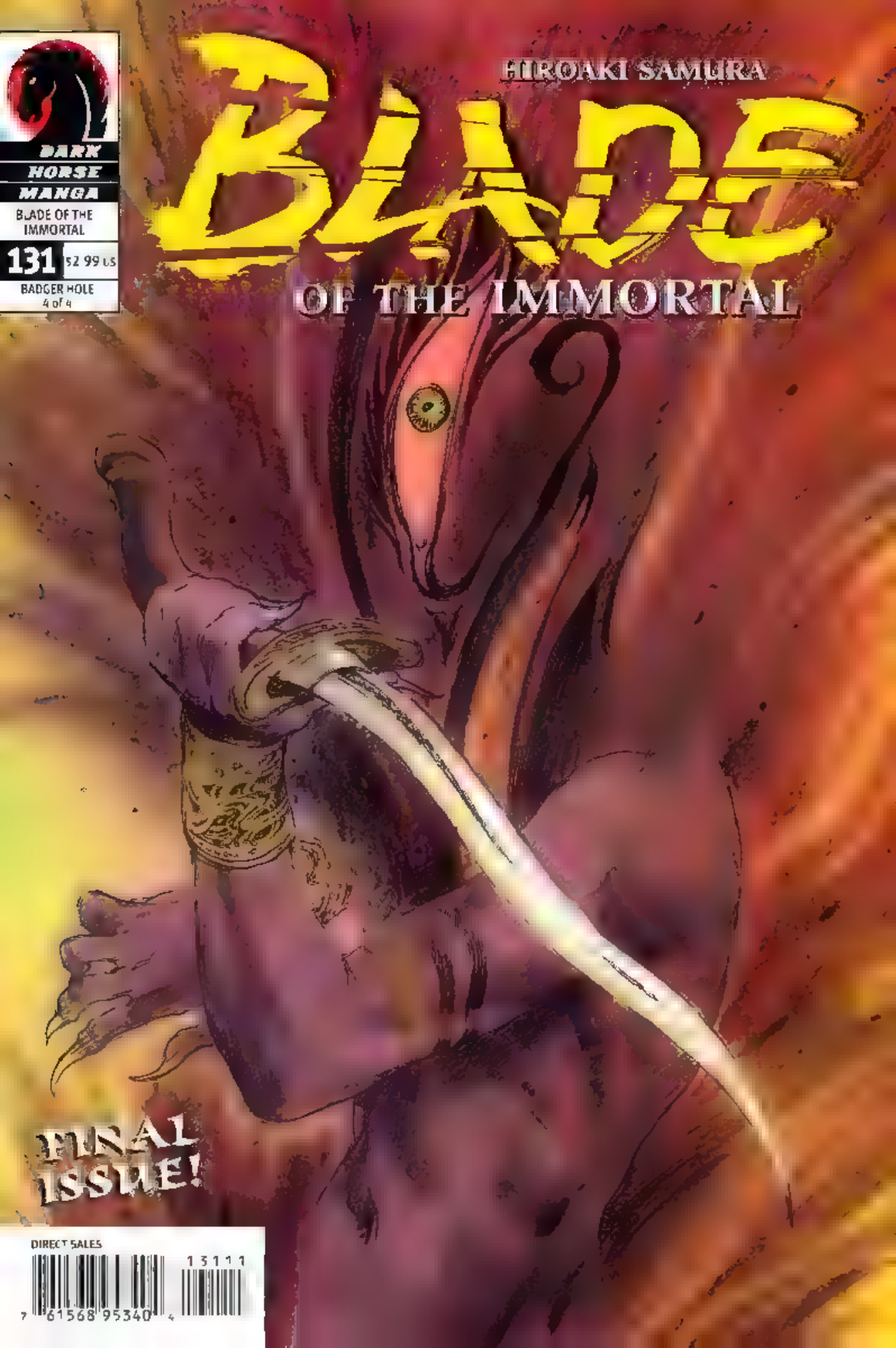
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無限の住人

BADGER HOLE
-part four-

SHREEE
WHAT A... HIDEOUS NOISE... A FLUTE?!

EEEE

H-
HALT!
WHA-?!
EEHH?!
WHAT
THE--?!
AHHN...?!
WH-WH-
WHAT
THE HELL
ARE
YOU?!

BWEEEEEEEEEE
GET IT!
SHUT...
BASTARD!
CUT IT OUUUT!!
GRAAK

THOK
AAIII EEEE!!
WHA...?

!!
SPAKK!
KLUNG
THUP

SHKK!
RIN!!
DAMN YOU! YOU'RE WITH--?!

UOHH!
PHOO
Y-YOU STINK!!
G-GET OFF! IDIOT!

YOUR ARMS ARE DIS-LOCATED. JUST... HOLD ON!
HAH HAH HAH!
WHAT... NOW?!

HEY, YOU!!
TAKE OFF THE MASK!
YOU DON'T MIND, RIGHT?! NOT AN ETIQUETTE THING...
...I'M JUST CURIOUS! WHAT KINDA GUY YOU--
!!
THAM!

FRAKK!
SPLOCH!
BOHF!

HA HA HA HA HA!
TAKE THAT! NOW WHAT'LL YOU DO?!
WHAT THE HECK? PAPER MACHÉ?!
HEY, HEY! BURNS FAST, NO?! BETTER HURRY AN--
HUH?

!!
BWOS!
FWSH
SHI--!!

SWEEP!
AHH!!
EEHH!!

SLOK
TK
TK
TK
PAU!
PAU!
PAU!

KWAN!

ROI' HA!!
ROI' HAAA!
.....
.....
.....

UH-HUH. WE CALL HIM OZUHAN.
ITTŌ-RYŪ?
.....
.....
HE USES THAT WHISTLE TO FREAK OUT THE ENEMY.
SAYS IT DOESN'T BOTHER HIM.
THE MOST DIFFICULT ITTŌ-RYŪ FIGHTER TO WORK WITH. HANDS DOWN!
CAN'T IMAGINE WHY...
MAH.
MAH!
OZU-HAN!
WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE? EH? WHAT?

TAILED US... FROM THE ENTRANCE?
KASHIN KOJI ASKED YOU?! REALLY?!
THEN HELP US SOONER, HUH?!
MIDWAY? YOU GOT LOST?! DUMMY!
AND WHY THE STUPID MASK?
SHE'S GOOD...
SNEAK IN? IN SE-CRET?
ANY-ONE'D NOTICE!!
...MM...
IT'S OKAY... NOTHING'S BROKEN...

...SO WHY... ALL ON YOUR-SELF?
EH? OH. OH, THAT...
I MEAN, IF YOU'RE INJURED, WE'RE FINISHED.
DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT. IT'S LIKE WHAT HE SAID...
...MAYBE WE'RE SAVING OUR FRIENDS...
...BUT WE'RE KILLING AS WE GO.
I NEVER THOUGHT WE'D GET OFF FREE.
SO! LET'S GO.
RIGHT... HUH?
HUH?!

WHERE'S NANDA-RŌ?!
YOU THINK HE RAN AWAY...?
THAT LITTLE RAT!
ACTUALLY, ANYONE WOULD.
BUT... THIS IS BAD. OUR CARGO...
.....
.....
.....
UHOHH!!

HABAKI-
DONO.
I WAS
ASKED...
WHO'S
IT
FROM?
AYAME-
DONO,
SIR.
BURAN-
DO?!

NOTE: SUCCESS

WOW! IS THAT... THE CASTLE?!
EDO CASTLE DOESN'T HAVE A TENSHU. REMEMBER?
JUST A YAGURA.
HNUFF
SO WHAT TO DO? IF WE FOUND A BEGGAR...
...HE COULD GUIDE US. BUT IT'S SO VAST...
DŌA! GET IT OUT.

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE *BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL* TRADE COLLECTIONS!!

END OF AN ERA
A RETROSPECTIVE

This is the end of an era, for the final issue of *Blade of the Immortal* also marks the end of the last regular manga series to be published in North America in comic book form. Manga today are so strongly associated in North America with the graphic novel format that we forget this has only been the industry standard for the last five of the past twenty years—an industry that began in May of 1987 with the release of *Lone Wolf and Cub* issue #1 from the now-defunct (but progressive in their time) First Comics—a title, of course, later to be picked up and completed by Dark Horse.

pin up by Russel Fox

Many new manga story genres have been introduced into the U.S. market in the years since, but I like the fact that this era ends right where it began, with an epic saga of warriors in old Japan. Like the cowboy, it seems safe to say the samurai has now proven himself a shape of hero people still want to read about, long after their times have passed. It should be noted as well that *Blade of the Immortal* is more than half as old as the U.S. manga industry itself: its run of eleven years and five months is, I believe, the longest any manga ever had in monthly comics format. That kind of staying power for a title any American comics company would be proud of, and we have you, the readers, to thank for it.

All through the late 1980s, the 1990s, and the turn of the century, manga in the U.S. thought of itself as part of the American comic books industry—by which I don't mean its publishers rejected or hid its Japanese identity, so much as they used what Japanese creators had to offer to consciously compete within the U.S. comics arena. People sometimes get the impression today that they live in an era of "authentic" manga as compared to the "Westernized" versions of the past, but looking back on it, you realize that in practical terms this is debatable.

Believe me: flopped or not, nobody in those not-so-long-ago days ever mistook manga for American comics, the reading direction made little difference to the essentials, and often the fine details, of how these Japanese creators' work came across in English. Some comics readers were down with manga, more accepted the influences of manga but didn't read manga themselves; many, perhaps most, remained indifferent to what manga had to offer. And you would quite often have patronizing and stereotypical dismissals of manga in the U.S. comics scene—fans and critics writing of it in terms that reminded you of running up to an Asian kid at recess, and pulling up the corners of your eyes.

The explosion of manga in the past five years is not so much due to a new "authenticity" or new care paid to their adaptation (in fact there is often less care paid now than Studio Proteus would have ever tolerated), but to new genres of manga becoming available through new publishing and distribution practices. On balance, it's a good thing. But that certainly doesn't imply that what came before must have been a bad thing. Philip and I both began as manga editors in that age, and although I've got to cut this short and get back to my own books ^_^ I could say a lot more, and that's how I intend to keep honoring the achievement represented by the words *Blade of the Immortal* #131.

—Carl Gustav Horn, September 2007

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KESSEN-CHU BLUES

In last month's "Letter From the Editor," I hoped to prepare everyone for the issue you now hold (or have clenched) in your hands: the final English-language *Blade of the Immortal* comic book. I would like to reiterate my *pride* in being able to edit these *Blade of the Immortal* monthlies for four fun years. Hiroaki Samura's wonderful, relentless manga series has always been an important and necessary escape for me. I enjoy a good cliffhanger, and Samura-dono is certainly a master at that. I also enjoy stories that are serialized (in comic books, newspaper comics, television shows . . .), so I'll miss these monthly episodes as much as you will. I was reading *Blade of the Immortal* as a monthly fan before coming to Dark Horse Comics, so I really am living a dream come true—and I'm very grateful. My favorite *Blade* moment (so far) is found in *Blade of the Immortal* #50: the entire last story page (or the last story page in the first "Gathering" trade collection—*Blade of the Immortal* volume eight). A confident Manji . . . a slash . . . the dumbfounded expressions on his opponents. The first two panels alone say it all. Giichi's my favorite character. I wish we could have done more thick, celebratory issues like *Blade of the Immortal* #100. My favorite single-issue story just might be "Pity," seen in *Blade* #103—Samura using two supporting characters to create such successful tension. As a fan, I thank Mike Richardson for keeping this series going for about two years longer than it might have, had it been published by another company. Mike's kept *Blade of the Immortal* on the stands since June 1996, giving it the heavyweight belt for longest-running single-title manga series in the United States!

Thank YOU, dear Samura fan, for staying faithful to our twisted, thirty-two-page excursion into darkness every month. You're the person this comic was intended for, and I hope you've been having a good time and have been enjoying all the extras and odd bonuses I've tried to add into every issue. I'd like to thank everyone else who helped get this amazing series delivered to you, but I'd just be listing off all of our Dark Horse employee names. (I'll thank you in *person*, comrades, if you come to my cubicle and tell me what your favorite *Blade of the Immortal* scene is so far.)

Toren Smith, Dana Lewis, and Tomoko Saito are the Holy Trinity of *Blade of the Immortal*. My assistant Ryan Jorgensen has been trying to keep me sane, and our designer Scott Cook has been telling me to stay crazy, as he's been game for every idea and last minute change that I've had—wearing an encouraging smile all the while. Debra Bailey was designing *Blade* right before Scott was, and she made my transition from *Blade* assistant editor to *Blade* editor a breeze some four years ago. Special thanks to Amy Arendts for giving this series a classy redesign back in 1998, "Miles Davis" Estrada and Cara "Lifesaver" for keeping all of our ships afloat, and Tim Ervin for saying, "Here—you're quite ready to do this." Chris and Samantha have kept the collected volumes rolling. Michael Gombos, Riko Frohnmayer, and Lance Kreiter have been my links to Kodansha over the years, ordering materials and sending covers and pages for approvals. Special thanks to our wonderful friends at Kodansha, especially Shohei Yoshida, Kohei Furukawa, Tomoko Suga, Niki Ueda, Hideko Morooka, and Ai Fukuhara. Thanks to the Dark Horse editors and assistants who've worked on past issues . . . Dave Chipps, Rachel Penn, Mike Hansen, and Tim Ervin as editors . . . and Dan Harris, Jeremy Barlow, Jason Lee, Mike Carriglitto, and Matt Pyon as assistants. Dan Jackson and Ryan Hill were my mischievous coloring shamans for non-Samura-painted front covers—thank you both for your patience and spectacular work. Jhomar Soriano deserves a standing ovation for sending in his great parody strips and pinups. I've already thanked YOU, dear reader, but I better thank you again . . . and, after all, this wonderful bloodbath will continue in Dark Horse Manga's collected *Blade of the Immortal* volumes! So I'll see you there!

Our monthly meetings are over, but long live the trade collections! And long live Manji! (Or *not*, if he doesn't want to.)

—Philip Simon, October 2007

9784063143805

雑誌 55722-80

ISBN4-06-314380-5

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大江戸桃色横丁

「奥さんっ！」
「駄目よ大八さん！
主人がもうすぐ……
ああっ……！」

続く（続かねえ）

著者近影

無限の住人

沙村広明

〈詠の十八〉

烏(からす)樫鳥(かしどり)ひるこうれて

鬼が来る～剣ヶ峰

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講談社

第百十九話 蜘の巣

IF THIS IS THE TOWER, THEN ...

FROM THERE...

LIKE THIS.

...TO THERE ...

SO NOW, WE'RE HERE ...

SO WE'RE GONNA GO STRAIGHT TO ISAKU?

EH?

IT TOOK ME HALF A DAY, BUT...

THIS MAP FINALLY MAKES SENSE.

AHA.

"FUKIAGE"?

WOW, LOOKS LIKE WE GOT FARTHER THAN I THOUGHT.

WE SHOULDN'T BE SEEN AROUND HERE...

EH, YES... WE'LL LOOK FOR A HIDING PLACE AND THEN WE'LL SEE.

RIN...

THE PLACE WHERE WE LEFT THE BADGER HOLE IS MARKED WITH A CROSS.

LOOK.

...BUT IT COULD ALSO MEAN "UNKNOWN."

I THOUGHT THAT MARK MEANT "PASSAGE" AT FIRST ...

THERE'S A LOT OF THEM NEXT TO THE INNER COURTYARD.

HE SAID HE TOOK HIS TIME TO AVOID RAISING SUSPICION.

HE'S BEEN GOING OUT FOR TEA WITH THE CASTLE DOCTOR HE'S GETTING THE INFORMATION THROUGH SMALL TALK.

DOA, HOW'D THE OLD MAN GET THE INFORMATION TO MAKE THESE MAPS?

OR PERHAPS, HE DIDN'T WANT TO TELL HIM WHAT HE KNEW...

. THE CASTLE DOCTOR COULDN'T TELL HIM ANYTHING ABOUT.

IT'S POS-SIBLE THAT HE MARKED THE PLACES ...

MEANING THESE MAPS WERE CREATED STEP BY STEP.

IT'S WORTH CHECKING OUT.

I'M GUESSING THERE'S SOMETHING THERE.

WAAH!

THAT'S NORTH!

...

I wonder if the healing caused that?

WOW! YOU'RE SO SMART, RIN!

HOHOHO... I AM INVIN-CIBLE!

OH THIS ?

ANOTSU ASKED ME TO MAKE THESE

NOW I KNOW THERE'S AN XXX THERE

ON THE FOURTH SHEET . THE CROSS NEAR THE FUKIAGE GATE

THERE ARE STILL A LOT OF BLANKS ON THERE FOR EXAMPLE

?

THOSE ARE ONLY

RIGHT NOW I M UPDATING THEM

THE FIRST SKETCHES

WE'RE COMING UP TO THE MARKED LOCATION.

AROUND THIS BUSH ...

OZUHAN, GET DOWN!

?

Trying to remember what XXX was

HERE ...!

HMM?

HE-SE-NAI!

Reihen bated.

WUAAAH!

EVERY-ONE!

INTRU-DERS!

THIS IS WHAT I WANTED TO AVOID ...!

DAMN IT!

MOVE IT!

?!

RIN! RIN!

...

THERE'S ANOTHER UNKNOWN MARKED LOCATION IN FRONT OF US...

HUH?

GO ...?

IM-PUDENT SCUM! THAT'S AS FAR AS YOU ...

HEY HEY HEY!

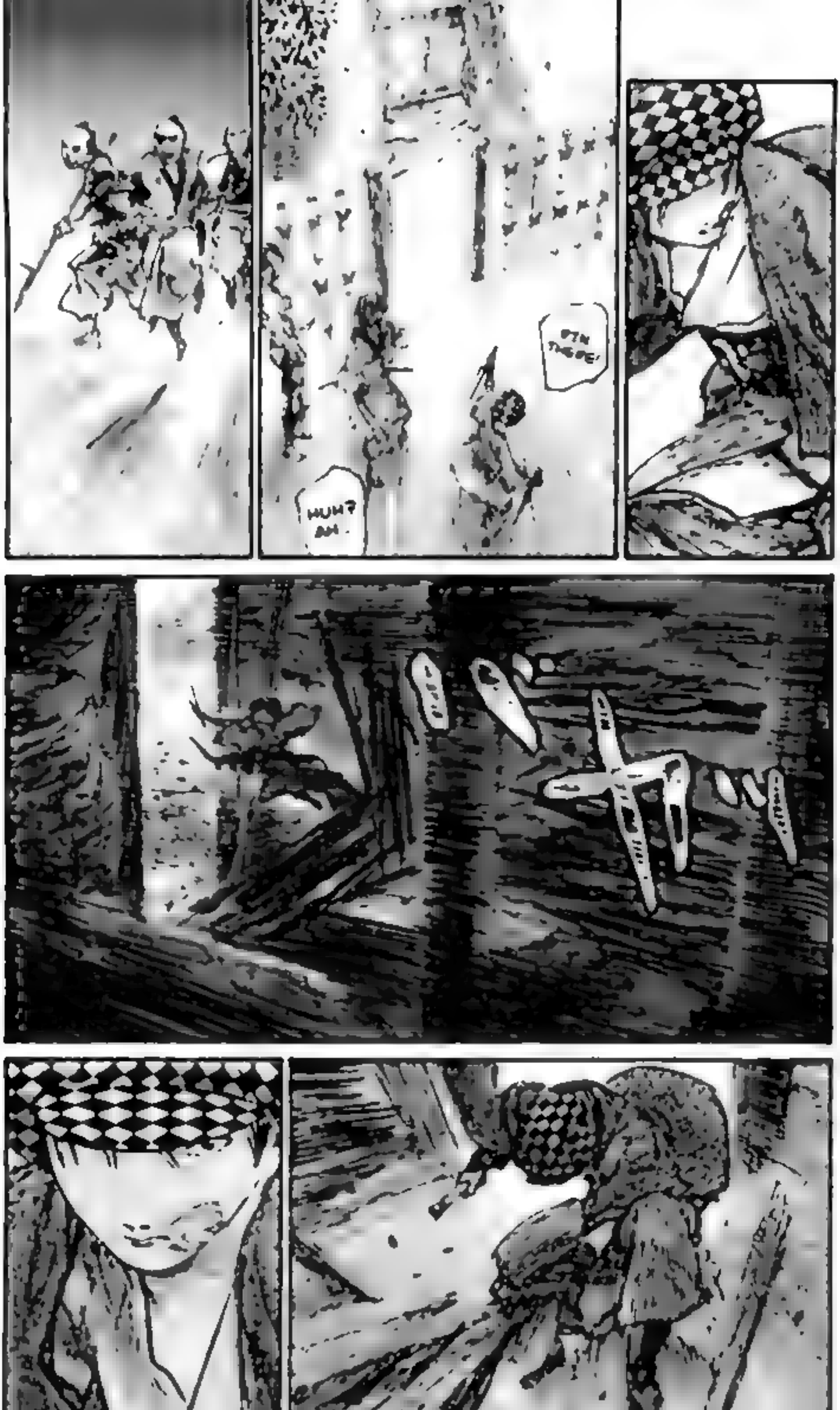
THE MARK IS BEHIND THE DOOR?!

WHAT?!

...

OVER THERE!

FOUND THEM!


HUH?
MM.

HOW YOU ALL DOIN'?

THIS ...

THERE'S AN AIRFLOW... WHERE DOES THIS TUNNEL LEAD TO?

!

?

QUICK-LY!

WHAT? IN HERE?!

OPEN THE BAGS. WE HAVE TO USE THEM!

WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME, DOA!

WHERE ARE THOSE TOR-CHES?!

OF ALL PLACES TO RUN AWAY TO, WHY'D IT HAVE TO BE *THIS* TUNNEL ...?!

HMM?

FOOL, LEAVE THE LAN-CES!

THERE! LOOK!

!

WHAT ARE THESE BAGS?

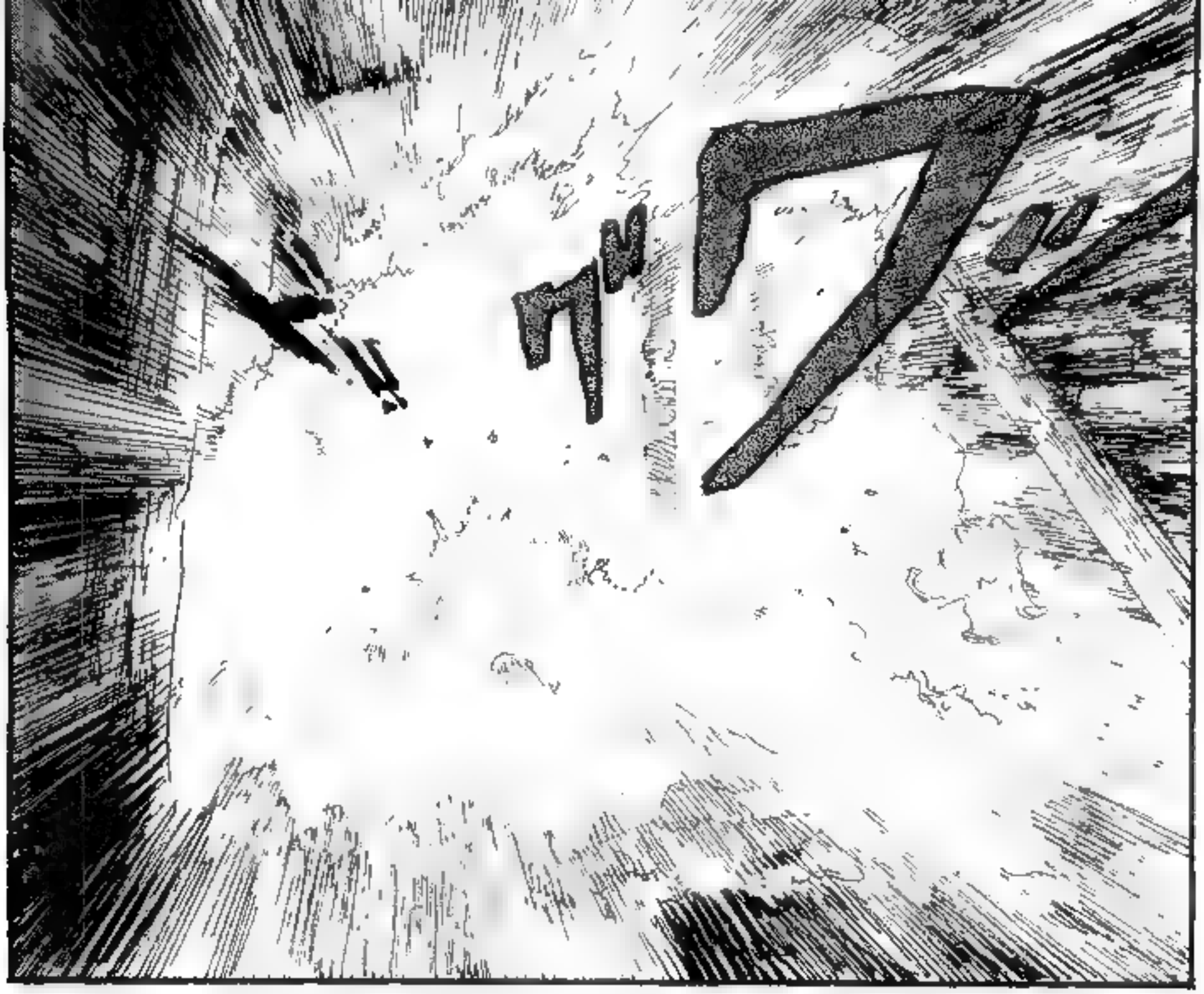
SHALL NOT SPARE YOU, WOMAN!

I, NU-MATA SAKON,

UH ...

YAAAH!

NUOOO ...!


٢٣

UH ...

AH!

WHAT'S GOING ON?!

ズゥゥウウ……ン

!

THEY'RE ALREADY ...

WE'RE HURRY-ING, BUT...

INTRU-DERS WERE SPOTTED ON CASTLE GROUNDS NEAR THE FUKIAGE GATE!

...WHAT?!

HAHAHA

HOLY CRAP ..!

DOA ...!

OVER HERE!

PIN! OZU-MAN!

GIVE ME A HAND?

COULD YOU...

I DIS-LOCATED MY SHOULDERS AGAIN...

I DIDN'T THINK THE CEILING WOULD COME DOWN...

I'M SOR-... HNGH!

IT'S A WONDER WE'RE STILL ALIVE.

THOUGHT I WAS GONNA DIE THERE

HE WAS BEHIND BOTH OF US.

DID THE EXPLO-SION ...?

THA-, THANKS.

BUT.. WHAT ABOUT OZUHAN?

THERE

SO NOW WHAT ...?

MAKES SENSE, TRUSTING IN THE ABILITIES OF HER COMRADES...

...

HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT. HE'S EVEN FASTER THAN ME WHEN HE WANTS TO BE.

HE PROBABLY WENT AHEAD.

AH, THANK GOD!

HERE THEY ARE.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MAPS?

AH, DOA!

WHAT'S NORTH OF THE GATE ...

LET'S SEE...

TO DOA:

I TOOK THEM AND I'M BRINGING THEM BACK. *FOOL!*

KOJI KASHIN.

WHAT'S HIS PROBLEM?! I THOUGHT HE CAME TO HELP US!

WHY THAT STUPID DUMB-SHIT ...!

OH WELL ...

DAMN YOU OZUHAN!

BUT IT'D BE A REAL PROBLEM IF WE GOT CAUGHT BY THE AUTHO-RITIES WITH THESE.

I DON'T KNOW WHY ANOTSU KA-GEHISA HAD THESE MAPS MADE..

Doa: Whacha! (think: Bruce Lee)

WE HAVE TO MOVE FORWARD ...

THERE'S NO WAY BACK...

WHAT'S UP?

I THINK SOME-THING'S THERE

...

COME HERE, LOOK AT THIS ...!

DOA!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM ...?

AH!

DAMN!

CHAPTER 119 | END

CHAPTER 120:
OTTER'S NEST
PART 2

※第百二十幕※
獺の巣
〈其の二〉

URGH
...

HNGH
...

DOA
...!

THE LOCK ...

HNGH ...!

UGH UGH!

HA ...

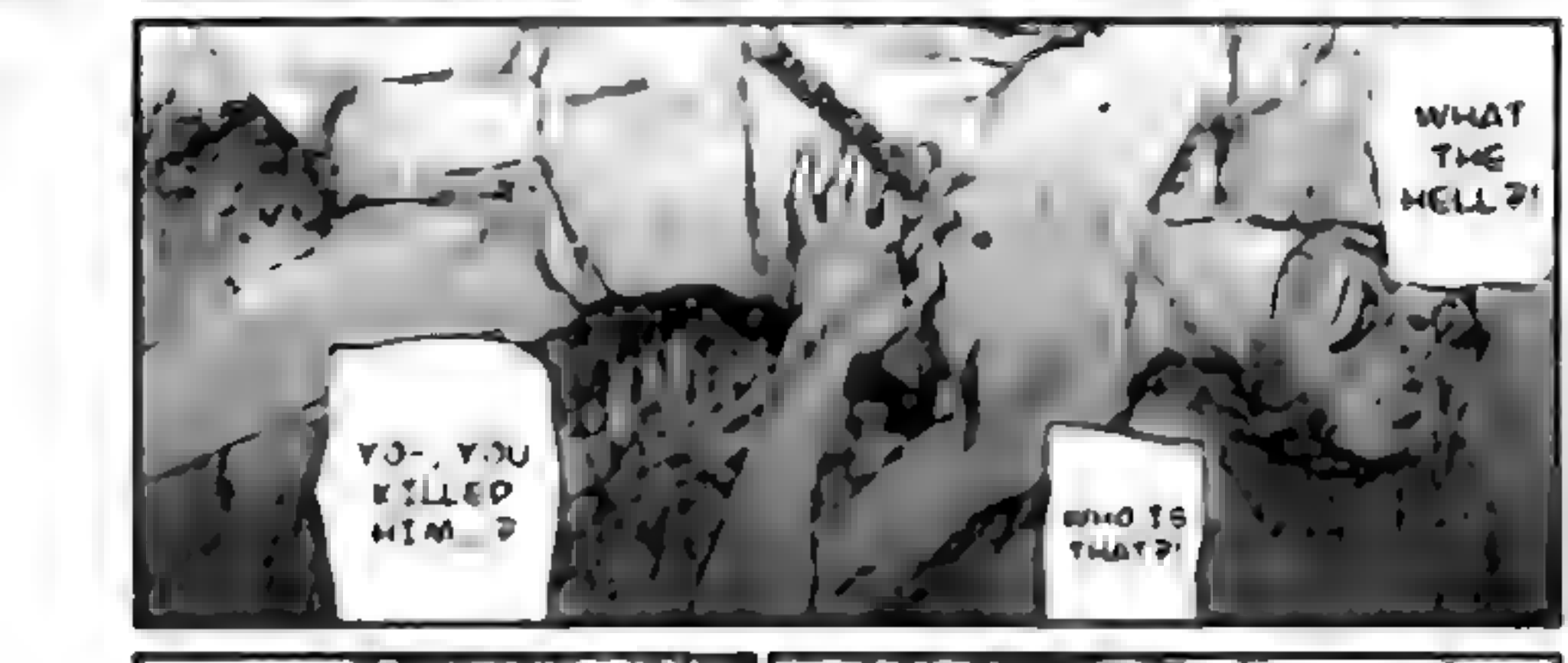
HA!

HA!

HAAA?

HNGH...

WHAT THE HELL?!


PROBABLY A CRIMINAL THEY PICKED UP TO EXPE-RIMENT ON

HE WAS GONNA KILL ME, I HAD TO DEFEND MYSELF!

I DIDN'T HAVE ANY CHOICE!

I GUESS PAIN AND FEAR TURNED HIM INSANE ...

OR PER-HAPS IT WAS THE MEDI-CINE

THAT CRAZED LOOK ..

YEAH? WELL YOU SURE LOOK LIKE YOU'RE CRITICI-SING ME.

KEEP IT DOWN, DOA..

NO ONE'S ACCUSING YOU OF ANYTHING.

WHAT ...?

AH!

AT A TIME LIKE THIS, WHY ARE YOU ...

HYAAAH!

WAH!

HA!

WAH!

AH!

NO WAY ...

...

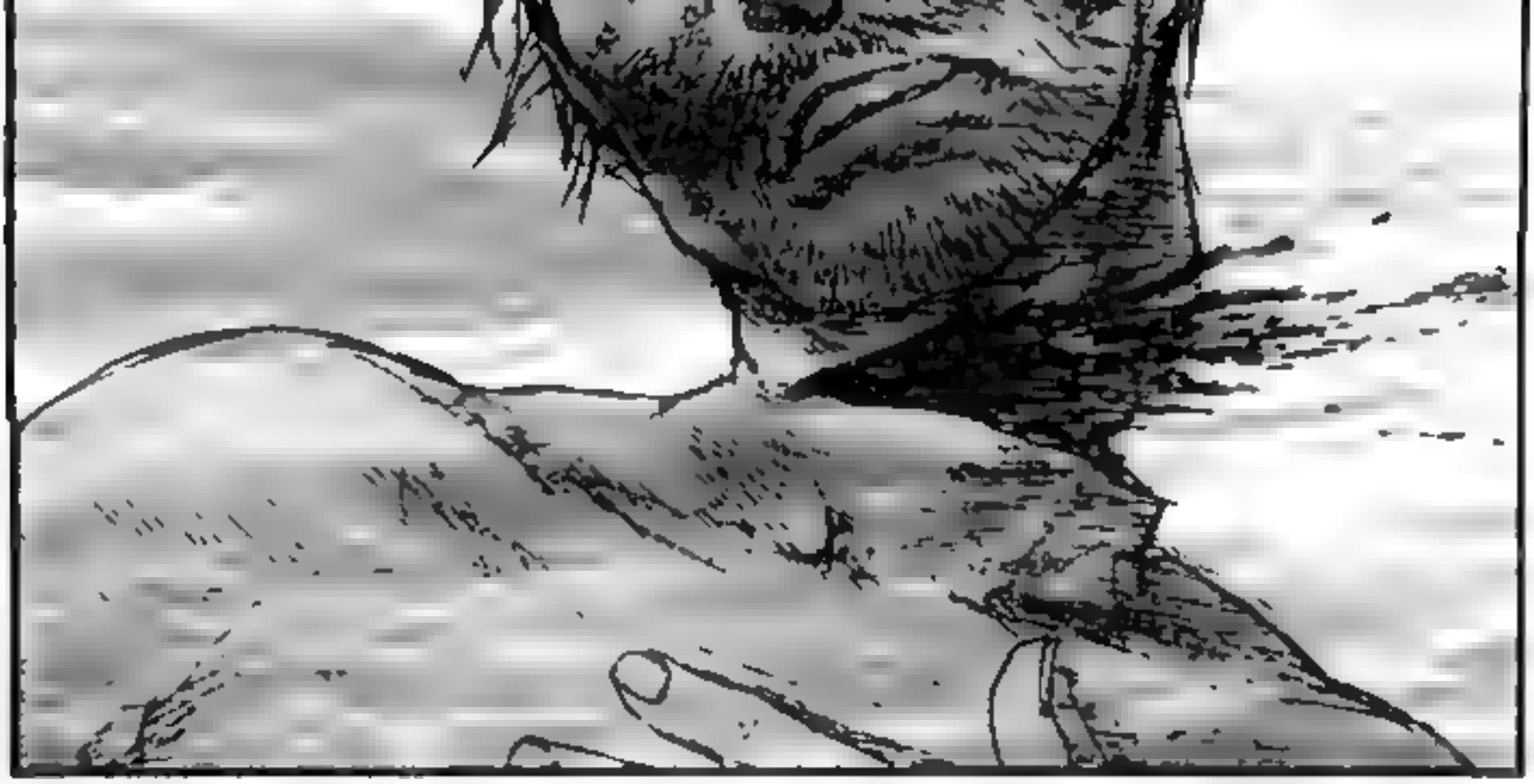
STAY BACK!

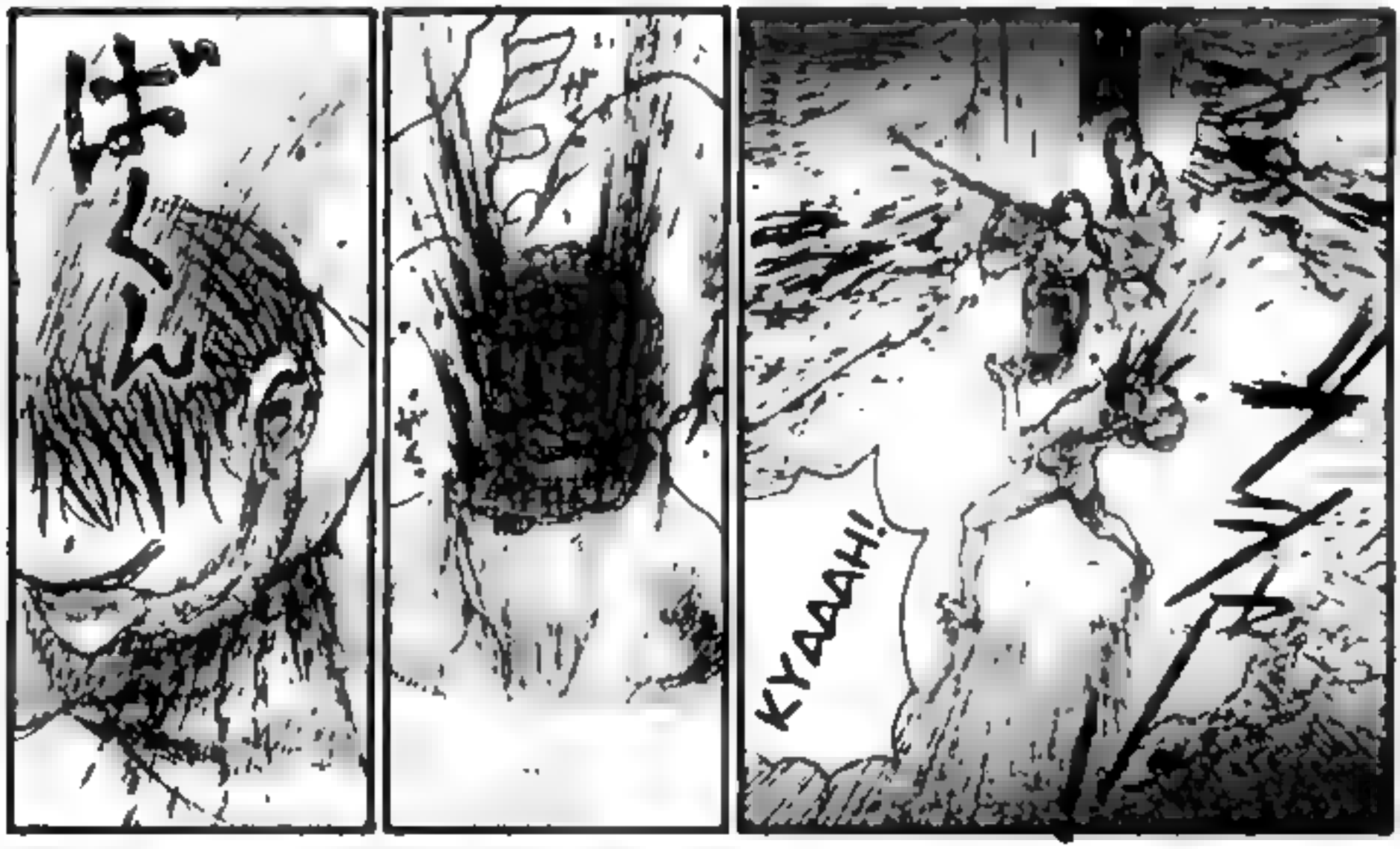
UWA AAAH

AH

STOP

DON'T




KYAAAH!

HIII
...
...

STOP IT!

DIE...

UGH?

...TO DIFFER-ENTIATE BETWEEN FRIEND AND FOE!

HE'S NOT ABLE...

HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING!

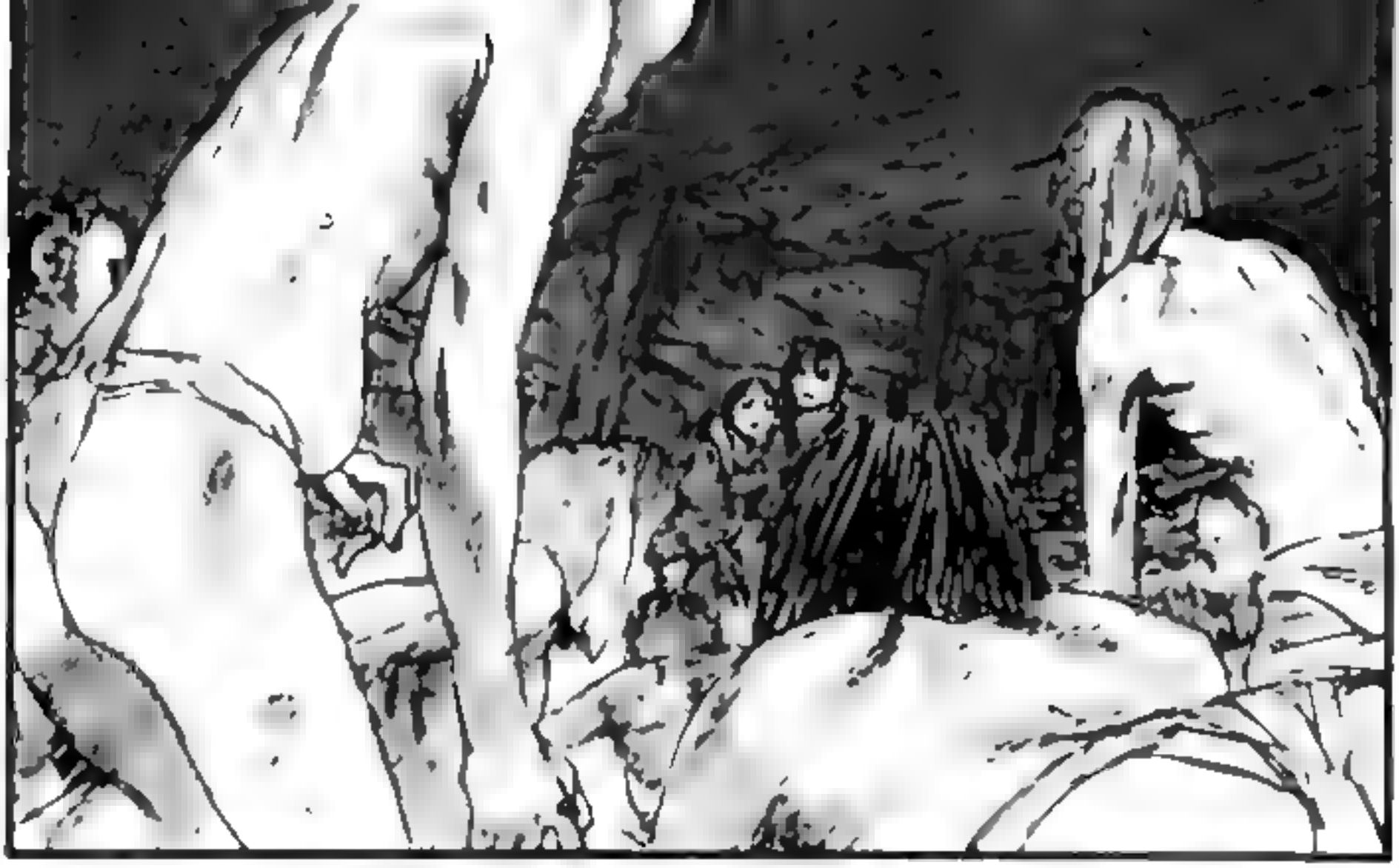
THE IMPACT OF THE EX-PLOSION ...

WE HAVE TO GET AWAY BEFORE

HURRY, WE HAVE TO GO BACK!

...HIS DOOR...

DIDN'T ONLY OPEN.



THESE ARE THE RESULTS OF THE IMMORTALITY EXPERIMENTS KOJI KASHIN TALKED ABOUT

LOOK AT THEM, DOC!

THEY'RE LIKE WILD ANIMALS... AWFUL!

THE THREE IMMORTALS I'VE SEEN SO FAR

WE'RE TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM THIS.

...
UNTIL THEIR HEADS ARE CUT OFF!

...
IT'S THE FACT THAT THEY KEEP GETTING UP...

BUT IF THERE'S ONE THING THEY'VE GOT IN COMMON ...

WE'LL HAVE TO FIGHT OUR WAY THROUGH!

WE HAVE TO CLEAR THE WAY!

WE CAN'T SET THEM FREE, BUT WE CAN'T TURN THEM BACK EITHER.

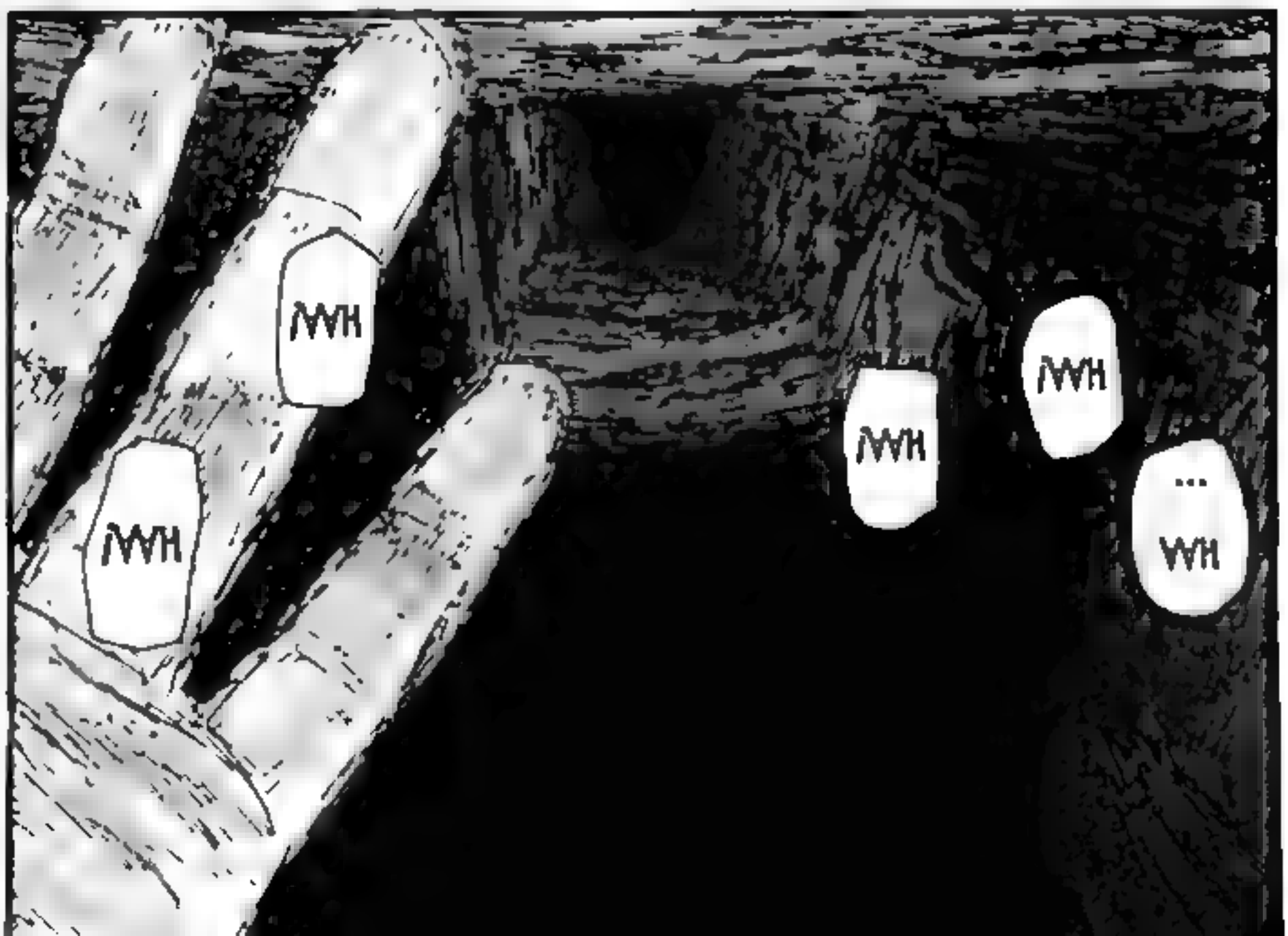
JUST BE SURE NOT TO CUT THEIR HEADS OFF!

YOU GET IT ...?

YOUR VOICE IS TREM-BLING, RIN

KYAAAH!
AAAHH!

UAAAAH!
AR GH!


WH
WH
WH
WH
...
WH

RIN ...

...

RIN, THERE'S ANOTHER TUNNEL IN FRONT OF US

UHUH ...

I DON'T THINK SO...

IF IT WAS, THE GUARDS WOULD HAVE COME TO INVESTIGATE THE EXPLOSION.

DO YOU THINK IT'S BEING GUARDED?

BUT EVERY STEP TOWARDS HIM...

SHOWS US MORE HORRIBLE THINGS ...

WHY AM I SO DEPRESSED?

EVEN THOUGH WE'RE GETTING CLOSER TO MANJI ...

...

EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEM..

THEIR VITALS WERE EITHER CUT OUT OR CUT OFF

!

IT ALL MAKES SENSE NOW

I SEE..

HMMM...

OTHERS TURNED IMMORTAL BUT LOST

CUT THEM UP TO SEE IF THE EXPERIMENT WAS WORKING. THE ONES LYING HERE DIDN'T GET BACK

THIS FAR FOR THEIR EXPERIMENTS

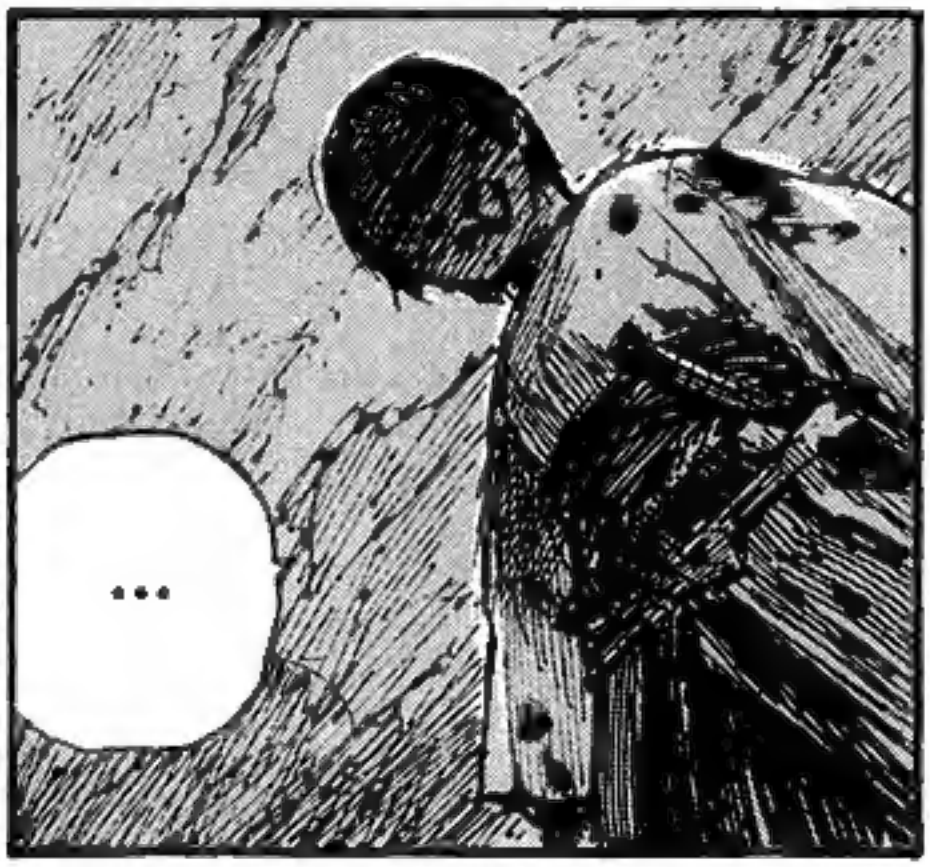
BUT ...

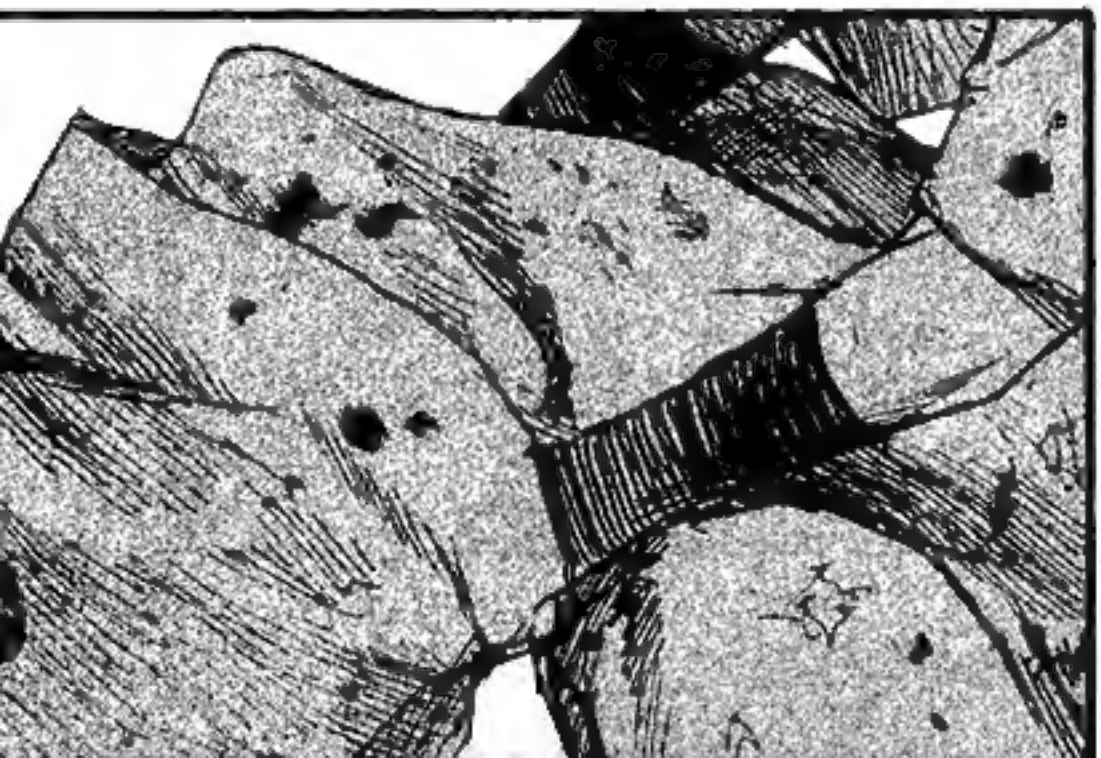
THAT'S

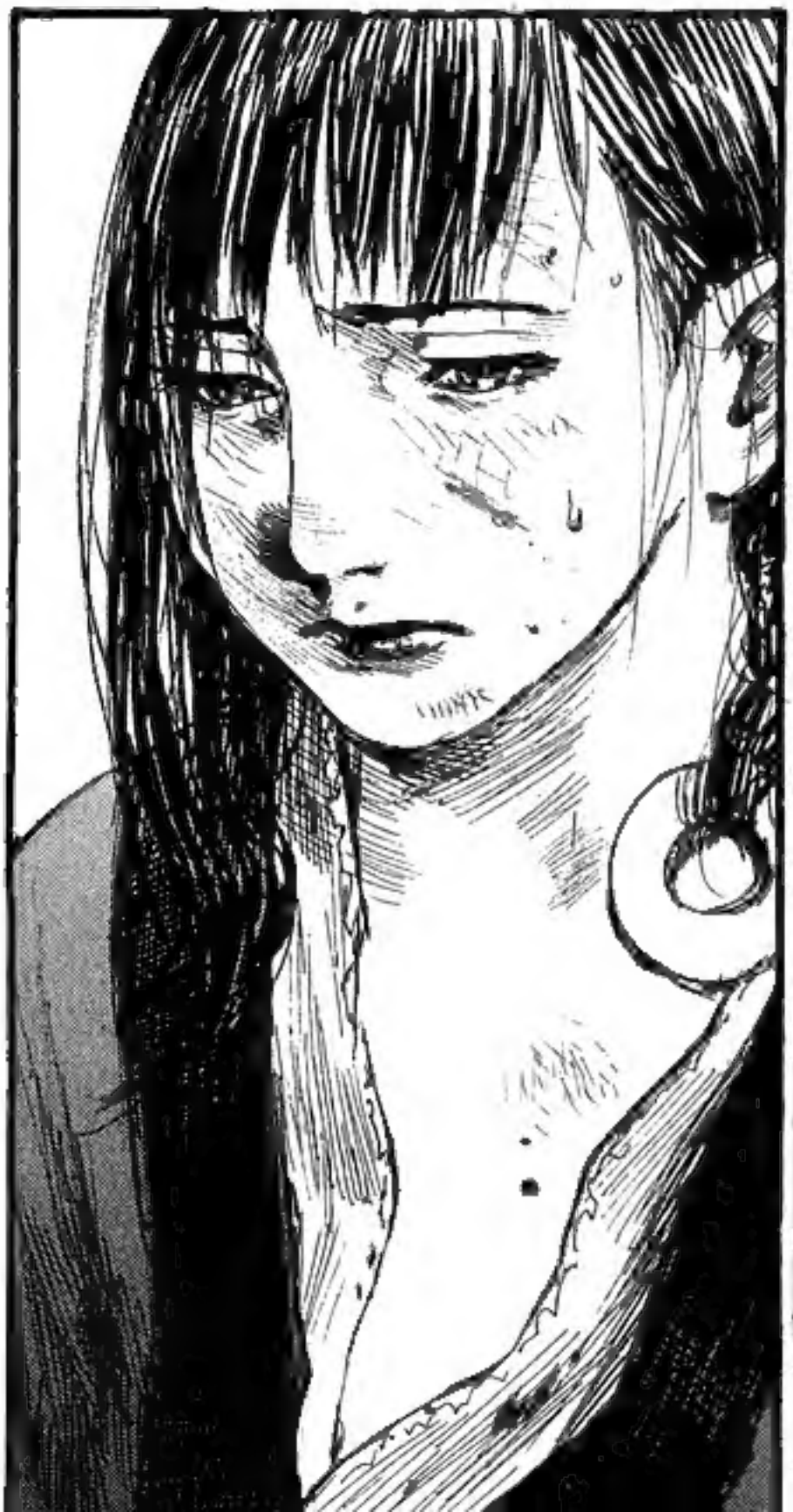
THAT'S

TO WASTE SO MANY LIVES

...







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講談社「アフタヌーン」編集部
アフタヌーンKC係

N.D.C. 726　215p　19cm

アフタヌーンKC—380

無限の住人 18

二〇〇五年六月二十三日　第一刷発行
（定価はカバーに表示してあります）

著者　沙村広明
発行者　五十嵐隆夫
発行所　株式会社講談社
東京都文京区音羽二—一二—二一
郵便番号　一一二—八〇〇一
電話　編集部　東京（〇三）五三九五—三四六三
販売部　東京（〇三）五三九五—三六〇八

印刷所　株式会社　廣済堂
本文製版所　豊国印刷株式会社
製本所　株式会社　フォーネット社

講談社

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ISBN4-06-314380-5　Printed in Japan

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